

# **EXHIBIT A**

Dear Judge Blakey,

My name is Evan Adams, and I live in [REDACTED], Illinois, with my wife and three kids. I'm a University of Illinois graduate and spent over a decade trading before moving into real estate management. I've known Mike since I was five years old. Our families first met in the 1980s in Fontana, Wisconsin, where we shared summers in the same condo complex. Those summers were full of sunshine, swimming, exploring, and evening barbecues with the Madigan family. My mom met Mike's wife, Shirley, at the pool while my sisters and I were playing with the Madigan kids. It was the moms who brought our families together, and through them, a lifelong friendship was born.

My father was born in Greece and grew up with very little—like so many who immigrated to the United States in search of something better. Despite coming from different worlds, he and Mike became fast friends, often spending their days golfing together. One of the ways my dad expressed love was through food—especially grilling. If he cared about you, he'd grill you a lamb chop to perfection. Many of our summer nights were spent around a patio table with both of our families, sharing meals and stories, laughing and connecting over life's joys and challenges.

Even as a child, I remember being struck by Mike's calm demeanor. He was one of the most patient people I'd ever seen. If one of his kids had a meltdown, Mike wouldn't raise his voice—he'd take a quiet walk with them, talking gently, trying to understand what they were feeling. I'll admit—I was once that kid. I don't remember what I was upset about, but I'll never forget how Mike talked to me. In that moment, and throughout our decades together, he has never been a "politician" to me. He has always been my, "Wisconsin neighbor," someone who felt like part of the family.

As I grew older and started working, I saw another side of Mike. He listened intently to everything I shared about my life and career, always asking thoughtful questions. He had a remarkable ability to remember details from past conversations, making me feel like what I said truly mattered.

While my experiences with Mike are uniquely my own, I want you to know—deep in my heart—I believe in him. As a person, a friend, and a mentor, Mike has quietly shaped my life in ways he probably doesn't even realize. And over the past decade, that truth has only become clearer.

I'd like to share two stories that illustrate just how much Mike has meant to me and my family.

My dad was the heart of our family. He passed away unexpectedly in 2015 while on vacation in Greece with my mom. Within hours of hearing the news, my wife and I were on our way to the airport, scrambling so I could catch the last flight out that day. In those chaotic, painful moments, I only asked my wife to call one person—Mike. I didn't ask her to contact any other family member or friend. It was instinctive. Mike held such a special place in my dad's heart—and in mine—that he was the only one I felt needed to know right away.

My wife told me that when she called, Mike and Shirley broke down in tears. After a few moments of stunned silence, Mike asked, “Where is he in Greece? I’ll fly out tomorrow morning to be with Evan and his mom. Shirley and I will go.” That response stayed with me. Most people offer condolences. Most say, “Let us know if you need anything.” Mike meant it. Without hesitation, he was ready to get on a plane halfway across the world just to be there for us. And I know—if I had said yes—he would’ve been there. Mike was at the funeral long before anyone else, waiting for our family to arrive. He was the first to wrap us in support, and the kind of steady, loving presence that holds you up when your world feels like it’s falling apart. His actions spoke louder than words ever could. And they reflected the same kind of trust, generosity, and love that my dad valued so deeply in him. I will never forget it.

In the months after someone dies, the calls slow down, and that’s what our family experienced. Mike is the one person who has consistently called to see how I was doing in the days that followed. He knew that I had my career but was also responsible for taking over my father’s business. Mike called off and on for months to see how I was doing, to ask how the family was. I’ve never shared this with Mike but having him call and check up on me was the closest thing to having a father-figure back in my life. Mike has always been ready to share a good story about my dad, say something the way he would have in a Greek accent, and offer his love and support for my family.

In 2023, I had a “widow maker” heart attack with a 12% chance of survival. It was, without question, the most terrifying moment of my life—and for my family, too. In moments like that, everything sharpens. You’re forced to pause and reflect on what, and who, really matters. As I began to recover, I was overwhelmed by the people who reached out and one voice I kept hearing was Mike’s. He called again and again to check in, to make sure I had a good doctor, to ask how I was doing, to tell me he was praying for me.

Once again, I was reminded: Mike was there. Quietly, consistently, genuinely—part of the incredible support system that has carried me through some of life’s most difficult chapters.

Life has taken our families in many different directions over the years, but the love and respect we share has remained constant. When our families have been together in Wisconsin, I’ve gotten to see Mike in his other role: as “Bumpa” to his grandkids. And it’s no surprise—he’s the same deeply present, thoughtful listener with them that he was with his own children. Watching him with the next generation is a beautiful reminder of who he’s always been.

Even during these past few years—when Mike has faced his own challenges—he’s still found time to reach out. To check in. To show up. And for all the reasons I’ve shared—and so many more—I’ll be forever grateful to him.

As you determine Mike’s sentence, I humbly ask that you consider the full picture of his life—who he is at his core, the quiet strength he has shown time and again, and the profound impact he’s had on those fortunate enough to know him. His legacy is one of compassion and unwavering presence. And to me—and to my family—he has been nothing short of exceptional.

Sincerely,

Evan Adams

## THEA K. FLAUM

Honorable John Robert Blakey

219 South Dearborn Street

Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Blakey,

In 1976, Michael and Shirley Madigan were married in our living room. We then had a small celebratory lunch (13 people) around our dining room table.

Joel Flaum, to whom I was then married, and I had known Shirley for many years. She and her small daughter, Lisa, had become part of our family.

In the nearly 50 years since, I have had many opportunities to get to know Mike—and to discover the fine person that he is. Mike is quiet, thoughtful, a born observer, and no good at small talk.

Mike is a loving husband to Shirley and an intensely caring father to Lisa and to Tiffany, Nicole and Andrew. As “Aunt Thea” to the Madigan children, I can attest to how much Mike is involved in their lives.

As a teenager, Lisa’s admiration for Mike and his commitment to government prompted her to focus on history and civics in high school. Mike called me when Lisa applied for a post-college program to work in apartheid South Africa to teach math and English to young Zulu girls at a remote rural school. He was worried about her safety and was concerned that she would be lonely. But he understood and appreciated that her determination to go to Africa was a reflection of what she had learned from him. Essentially, he had taught her to care. She went with his blessing.

Over the years, Mike would often call and ask me to “talk” to one of the children. (The kids almost always suspected that he had prompted me to call.) It often turned out that the person I really needed to talk to was Mike. His children were growing up in ways that were so different from his own experience that it was hard for him to understand. But to Mike, understanding them was always worth the struggle.



Joel swore-in Mike as Speaker of the House in 1983.

Mike once told me that he got through law school by "outworking everyone else." and that his success as Speaker was merely the result of hard work and paying attention to detail—not because he was some kind of legislative genius. I know that Mike firmly believed that he could make a difference, and that he is responsible for much legislation that has made Illinois lives better.

I write this letter in the hope that I may have given you a fuller picture of who Mike Madigan is, and that you will take it into account in considering your sentence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thea K. Flaum".

Thea K. Flaum

Letter in Support of Michael J. Madigan  
Lisa Madigan

On August 20, 1976, shortly after I turned 10, my mother married Mike Madigan. The ceremony took place in Joel and Thea Flaum's living room with Judge Flaum presiding. From the time I was born, Joel and Thea Flaum were my mother's closest friends and Uncle Joel and Aunt Thea to me. They were there for us everyday of my tumultuous childhood and always remained our family.

Everyone agreed that Our Family improved dramatically that day.

Not only had my mother married a man who truly loved her, she had also married a man who took on total responsibility for serving as my father. While I initially called him Mike, I soon recognized he was my father and I referred to him as such.

**Mike embraced me as if I was his biological daughter.**

At the time, I did not fully appreciate the role of a state representative, but I immediately recognized Mike's picture in the copy of the State of Illinois Handbook my fifth grade history teacher handed out to me. After I saw it, I went up to Miss Elmer's desk and told her that Michael Madigan was my father. She told me that was not true, and I told her my mom had married him over the summer. She still doubted me. That night, I repeated the story to my mom and Mike, and not long afterwards, he came to speak to our class and explained government to us and what a state representative did.

At the end of that school year, I started to learn a lot more about state government. Instead of going to summer camp like many kids, Mike took me to the capitol in Springfield where I worked everyday until the end of the legislative session. That's what I did every year after I got out of school in the spring until I graduated from high school.

Serving as an honorary page was my first "job." It essentially involved running errands for members of the House of Representatives. I got them coffee, lunch, and copies of bills (this was long before they had computers). Sitting in the House chamber during session allowed me to have an up close view of the personalities, work, and ethics of many legislators, legislative staff, members of the press, and statewide elected officials.

Letter in Support of Michael J. Madigan  
Lisa Madigan

Almost every night, we had dinner with Representative Zeke Georgi, and I listened to him and Mike discuss the day's issues. What I saw and learned was inspiring and unique. While I encountered plenty of lazy, drunk, and ethically questionable people serving in and around the legislature, the qualities I witnessed in these two were different. They took their positions seriously. They were hard working, helpful, ethical, and engaging.

**Mike is the personification of "workhorse."**

Mike regularly worked 12 hour days. When he was preparing for or in session in Springfield, he was the first elected official to arrive at the capitol, before or by 7 am, and usually the last to leave at night, around 7 pm. After the regular legislative session ended in the spring or early summer, my father would go to work at one of his other two offices. He worked at his ward office or his law office roughly the same hours as he did in his Springfield office. Plus, he worked on the weekends. The only events that changed his Saturday schedule were watching the Notre Dame football game (even when the team was having a bad year), taking his kids or grandkids to a baseball game, the zoo, or attending a family birthday party. Waking up early and working seven days a week is one of Mike's defining characteristics and a main reason for his decades of political and professional success. I do not think I've ever met a person who is more disciplined and works harder than he does. Certainly not under the dome in Springfield, Illinois.

**Mike is meticulously ethical and honest and shunned many of the perks of elected office.**

I can recall many times when Mike declined to accept or use everything from gifts to gratuities.

For example, legislators used to get a card that allowed them and their families free entrance to the Brookfield zoo. When we went there, however, Mike never used a free pass. Instead he paid for our admission. I recall asking him why once, and he told me that if you can afford to pay for something, it is appropriate for you to pay just like everyone else.

In another example, Mike never wanted to purchase or use his legislative license plates. For Illinois House members the number on the official plate you could buy reflected your seniority in the chamber. So for many years, he could have had a



Letter in Support of Michael J. Madigan  
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"1" on his license plate, but that was never of interest to him, and he did not.

For a less formal example, from time to time we would be out to eat and at the end of the meal, the waiter would not bring a check and instead tell us the meal was on the house. Mike would never abide by that. He would politely but firmly tell the waiter, manager, or owner to give him the check so he could pay for the meal or he would not return to the restaurant.

Based on those examples, it should not be surprising that decades ago, long before Illinois enacted a gift ban, Mike adopted a policy of not accepting gifts from any registered lobbyists in order to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. If someone tried to deliver a gift to his home or any of his offices, the delivery person was told to take it back.

Mike is also someone whose word you could trust. He is truthful. Sometimes I liked what he said and other times not, but I knew he was being honest and would keep his word. That was not always the case with people in and around the legislature.

Mike was always concerned about keeping a clear line between his official government duties and his private law practice. One way Mike worked to ensure that there could be no questions about ethics or conflicts of interest was to put in place strong conflict of interest procedures in both the speaker's office and his law office. His offices coordinated to avoid questions about conflicts arising on legislation and business matters.

To the extent there were ever questions about the legality or ethics of any practice, he sought the advice of his counsel and outside lawyers before proceeding.

These are not traits of a rulebreaker. Mike was cautious and aware of the law and where the legal lines were. Mike would never knowingly do anything illegal.

**Mike always helped people however he could.**

If you serve in public office, people are always asking you for help. Everyday. They come to your office, stop you at the store, on the street, in church, restaurants, parking lots, and run up or shout to you at parades. Most of the time, they are asking for your help to get them a job. Once I was walking out of a dressing room in the lingerie department at Macy's and a woman

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who had seen me walk in thrust her resume into my hands and asked me to help her get a job. If you're a public official, in any branch of government, it's expected that you will recommend people you know for job opportunities and it's unavoidable that people you don't know will ask for your assistance as well. I certainly received plenty of requests and recommendations from judges to hire their clerks for positions in the Illinois Attorney General's office. Job referrals are endemic in the public (and also private) sector. In fact, I still receive requests from people seeking my help to secure jobs in government. If you don't want to assist people, including helping them find job opportunities, then government service is not for you. My father always helped people however he could. That truly is the essence of public service.

**Mike takes his role as father and grandfather seriously.**

In spite of his 70+ hour work weeks, Mike always made time for family. After he had been away in Springfield all week, he would take me out for pizza when he got home on Friday nights. He did the same with my sisters and brother as they grew up.

With all of us, his primary focus was making sure we knew he loved us. He was just as concerned that we grew up to be honest, responsible, and well educated people.

For example, when I was in high school, I often drove to school and usually had trouble finding parking nearby. When I found a spot, I would park, feed the meter, and walk several blocks to school. I didn't go back to the car until seven to twelve hours later once school and after-school sports events were done. By the time I returned the meter had always expired and sometimes the car had been ticketed. I'd remove the ticket from the windshield, stuff it under the floor mat on the passenger's side, and drive home. I never told my parents about the tickets piling up, nor did I attempt to pay them. One day my poor parking ticket management and questionable teenage judgment caught up with me. I don't recall exactly how Mike found out about the dozen plus parking tickets I had accumulated on his car, but I do recall he was angry with me and made me pay for them. I spent most of the money I had earned the previous summer paying the fines.

In a city where people used to talk about having parking tickets "fixed," I learned from Mike that I was expected to follow the law - either feed the parking meter or pay the parking tickets.

Letter in Support of Michael J. Madigan  
Lisa Madigan

He has always been a scrupulous rule follower and expected the same of his children.

With my sisters and brother, when he was away in Springfield, he would get their spelling lists and call home every night to drill them.

Here is the advice he gave all of us when we went to college:

1. College is a great opportunity
2. Take advantage of it
3. Focus, don't waste time
4. Look ahead, so prepare now
5. Exercise

We still get together for weekly dinners unless a Notre Dame football game interferes.

**Mike keeps my mother alive.**

My mother and Mike were both born in 1942. They both turn 83 this year.

Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, five years ago, my mother has rarely been well enough to leave their house other than to go to see her doctors because she is extremely susceptible to infections due to a severe lung disease. Since then she has been admitted to the hospital three times. For this reason, she only attended the trial the first day for opening statements because it is very difficult for her to breathe and her doctors do not want her around people who she may catch a cold from.

She is able to remain in their house primarily because of the care my father provides. He shops for groceries, brings her food (as you heard during the trial), does laundry, and generally takes care of her and their house.

**Michael Madigan is among the finest people to ever serve in government.**

Mike has been my father for nearly 50 years. Few people know Mike Madigan the way I do. I grew up with him and worked adjacent to him in government. I know the real Mike Madigan, not the grossly distorted picture the media, his political enemies, and prosecutors have painted and promoted of him over the years.

Letter in Support of Michael J. Madigan  
Lisa Madigan

I have known many elected officials over the years. Without a doubt Mike is among the finest that has ever served Illinois. I say with complete certainty that we need more people in public service with his values.

As I have said publicly before and am still very proud to say now, I did much better with fathers the second time around. I learned life's most important lessons from Mike, and I have spent my life living them and repeating them to the next generation of women, lawyers, and leaders in Illinois and across our country:

Get as much education as possible.  
Be prepared to work hard.  
Help others whenever you can.  
Be honest and scrupulously ethical.

Mike Madigan always has done all of those things for the entire time I have known him.

I know Mike Madigan would never intentionally commit a crime. He is the consummate rule follower. Punishing him for trying to help people - something we are all taught to do - is the true injustice.

Honorable Justice Blakey  
Northern District Federal Court  
219 South Dearbor Street  
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Justice Blakey,

My name is Tiffany Madigan. I have been absolutely blessed to have Michael Madigan as my father and I can speak unreservedly about the quality of his character during the more than four decades I have known him.

I have been a parent for 14 years and each year I have gained a greater appreciation for what an extraordinary father I have. There has never been a single time I have questioned whether he would be there for me or whether he loved me. He has never burdened me. He embraced parts of me that others ridiculed. He has always supported me and allowed me to be myself - and I have rarely made that easy. I think he's just an incredibly good person, but underlying it all is a consistent moral code.

To understand the importance of values in our family, you have to understand the role of politics in the lives of politicians' families. I have never lived in a world where my father was not a political figure and I learned at a very young age that my family was under increased scrutiny at all times due to my father's political role. My earliest years are sprinkled with memories of protests outside our home, people who took my toys from our backyard claiming they were theirs because they paid taxes for my father's salary, people trying to take my clothes off my body with the same logic, people blocking our stairs out of spite, people telling me and my family we didn't belong, as well as waves of political and press attacks - there is an enormous amount of anger at society that gets directed at politicians and their families. It can be difficult to not lash back in anger in response. But I never saw either my father or mother react that way.

While I cannot say that I exemplified that same restraint, I did learn at a very young age that my actions reflected on my family. If I was a brat in a restaurant, stole a pack of gum, or even was reasonably angry - if I behaved in a way that angered others - it could have a seriously negative impact on my entire family. It's surprisingly tricky to avoid making people angry.

To help us understand how to navigate this kind of a life, we spoke (and speak) frequently about the obligations members of society have to each other - values, morality, right and wrong, fairness and the lack thereof, respect, empathy and humanity. The core of the ethos is honesty and kindness. You have to be honest and approach others with kindness and if you hold to those core values, you can make your way through the world. We didn't have the luxury of being casual or inconsistent about how we approached these things and that standard was applied to our relationships as well.

Once when I was maybe 5 my parents were going out for the night. They wanted me to nap but I wanted to say goodbye to them before they left so I only agreed to nap if they promised to wake me up to say goodbye before they left. They, as rational parents, did not wake me from my much-needed nap when they left. When I woke, I was inconsolable. And although my father didn't understand my response, he promised me he would never tell me he would do something and not do it again. And he never has.

Once when I was around 8, I was at Santucci's restaurant, which used to be across the street from Midway Airport. I was talking but could tell my father wasn't listening. So I said, dad, a plane just crashed through the roof, and he said, uh huh. And my younger sister and I started laughing hysterically and he looked up and I told him I had proof that he wasn't listening. He laughed and admitted that he hadn't been. And he started paying attention more consistently. There weren't a lot of fathers in the 80s who took well to their children calling them out and even fewer who were willing to change their behavior as a result.

I first started receiving letter grades in sixth grade and my father sat down to review my first report card the same way he reviewed bills, with a red felt pen to mark up points. What he approached as an involved parent who wanted to help his daughter succeed, I, a headstrong adolescent, experienced as an aggressive personal attack. I told him, I'm sure in different words, that I couldn't handle the stress of reviewing grades with him and I never wanted to do it again. He promised me he would never make me do it again and despite going through a review of all grades with all my other siblings, he never reviewed my grades with me again. And I knew he wouldn't. When he told me he wouldn't do something, I knew he wouldn't.

When I was in college my father used to send me letters with clipped news articles he thought might be interesting. The letters were typed but the signature of "Dad" was done by hand. A couple of times I noticed that someone else had signed, "Dad", it just wasn't his handwriting - and to whoever did that I completely understand, my father was an incredibly busy person and it was a practical and reasonable solution. But I called him out on it, teasing him that he should have enough time to sign "Dad" to his daughter. I still get those letters. And they've never been signed by anyone other than him since I discussed that with him.

Another aspect of political existence that I knew well from a young age were the rules around conflicts of interest - those rules often apply to family members of politicians so I needed to know them to avoid inadvertently breaking them. I knew all about them and how they applied to our family in the early 90s when I was in an elevator running an errand and two other people in the elevator, not knowing who I was, were gossiping and making suppositions about my family - I knew they were wrong and I knew it because of how careful and diligent my father was about monitoring and addressing conflicts. I remember my father explaining his philosophy that because he was under such intense scrutiny, it wasn't enough to simply follow the rules. He took a more conservative approach and explained to me that he needed to avoid the "appearance of impropriety". He regularly explained it in detail, along with examples of where things would

cross a line. I remember arguing with him about the concept in our living room, where he would frequently sit on a couch to read or review documents. I insisted that in a just society rules should stand on their own, the "appearance" of something shouldn't constitute malfeasance because it was imprecise, subjective, and didn't give people adequate notice of the law. He, as always, kindly, patiently, and with a smile, explained that this is simply how the world works. And that in our family, we were obligated to not only follow the law but also ensure that our behavior didn't give anyone any doubt that we followed the law. There was a higher standard applied to our actions.

I have two children and my father is an important figure in their lives. They look up to him, respect him, tease him, and love him. He regularly picks them up from school, takes them out to dinner, keeps up on their studies and activities, helps them with schoolwork and navigating social issues. He teaches them about life from that same solid moral compass that he used to guide my three siblings and I many years ago. He isn't rigid, he's open to developing and growing, and has consistently done so when presented with evidence that he should.

My father is an incredible man. He is driven by love and a sense of duty, both to people and our social order. He worked hard his entire life to provide for his family, mentor future leaders, improve lives for as many individuals, families, and communities as he could, and to be a voice of reason and a steadying hand in the often volatile and narcissistic world of politics. He has met countless leaders across the country and world and has never valued any of those people or experiences more than dinner with his family. He is a kind, decent and loving man. I respectfully ask that you consider his incredible character and consistent history in making your decisions.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Madigan



## **Letter in Support of Michael Madigan**

I am Nicole Madigan, Shirley and Michael Madigan's youngest daughter. I grew up in the same working-class neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest Side that my dad grew up in. My dad and my mom still live in the same house that they bought after marrying nearly 49 years ago, raising four children and four grandchildren. Like my dad, I am a lifelong resident of Chicago. He worked for the City Department of Streets and Sanitation hauling trash to pay his way through school. His parents did not graduate from high school, but he worked hard at Notre Dame and Loyola Law School despite his own father's doubts that he was smart enough to graduate. Dad became an attorney with a private practice of real estate tax appeals and served as Speaker of the House of Representatives of Illinois for nearly 50 years.

He went from working on a garbage truck to being the longest serving Speaker of a State House in United States history. He achieved that through diligence and adherence to his ethical and moral code. He worked hard, every day, weekends, and even holidays if necessary. There was always something that needed to be tended to and he took his responsibilities as speaker seriously. He worked hard and expected those around him to work as hard, including us, his children.

Dad has been a genuine public servant, dedicated to improving the lives of others through being a caretaker of State government. He understood that a responsibility of leaders is to use their power for good and to help people as much as they can. He is hard-working, thoughtful, and known as a man of his word by members of all political parties. Politics requires coalitions, working with different people, coming to different conclusions based on different facts, and voting in the interest of the people. This is the America of our Constitution. There is a normal give and take to a collaborative process. My dad's true talent was his ability to listen, research issues independently in a detailed oriented manner, listen to the different sides and his staff and bring diverse groups of people in the state together to compromise on legislation in the best interest of the people of the State of Illinois.

My dad lived by a code of honesty with us and everyone around him. Even at a very young age, I knew that because my dad was an elected official my family was held to a higher ethical standard because we needed to be a model of behavior. My first memory was being in a friend's car around age 5 and their mom told me that I "better buckle up my seatbelt because your dad passed the seatbelt law". I quickly buckled my seatbelt. To this day, I still think about that when I buckle up that I need to comply with the law, especially those that my dad helped pass to keep us safe on the road. When I was around 10, we took a trip to Disneyland. Dad was in line to pay for the park tickets and I read on the ticket counter that there was no ticket needed for children under 3. My brother was just over 4 years old but looked younger. I asked dad, why don't we just say that he is 3? He responded that we don't do things like that, we do the right thing and will pay for his ticket, and he did.

My parents had a college graduation party for me, and I received gifts from family and friends. Dad required that I give him all the gifts so that his attorneys could review who gave them, what the gifts were and the value of the gifts to determine whether or not I could accept them as his daughter. In the end, most of those gifts were returned to avoid the appearance of impropriety. That is how dad has lived his life, even when technically allowed under the law, he would err on the side of caution to avoid an appearance of impropriety. When I started practicing as an attorney, I

was working on a matter and realized after accidentally picking up another colleague's document at the printer that the client that I was working for was on the other side of a different transaction as my colleague's client. I approached my colleague and asked if the conflicts check had been cleared and he brushed it off and said not to worry about it. I heard my dad's voice telling me that it was not okay to make that presumption, so I spoke to the partner that I was working with on the matter. In fact, conflicts had not been cleared, and a waiver was needed, and obtained, to continue our representation of that client.

Most important is who he is as a dad, granddad and husband. My dad is patient, loving and kind. He takes his responsibilities in our family seriously, seeking to help all of us no matter how big or small the problem even at age 83 when most people turn to their children and grandchildren for help. He takes our cars into get serviced or picks up his grandchildren from school. He looks for opportunities to be helpful to us. My mom taught him what love is. Despite coming from a family that did not openly display affection with each other, he, along with my mom, built our family on a foundation of true love and devotion to each other creating our close and loving family. That love is rare and has been the stability that has grounded my life, and those of all of my family members, despite difficult challenges and given us the strength to endure the months' long trial. He provided for me and my sisters and brother and always told us that the most valuable things in life are hard work, family, honesty and education. All three of his daughters became attorneys. Our father is proud of us, and we are proud of him.

Even though dad worked nearly every day, no matter what, I knew that my dad would be there for me and anyone else that he could help. I never felt that he was distant or not present in my life even when he was in Springfield for session during the week for months at a time. He was a caring and devoted father. He would call every night from Springfield not to just speak to us but to go over our homework and make sure that even though he was hours away, we knew that he was paying attention to what we were doing in school. In grade school my spelling was not great, and I was surprised when during one of our nightly calls he started quizzing me on spelling that he had my mom send to him so that he could over it with me. He meticulously went over my report cards, praising the good remarks, and helping me to improve when I got not such great comments. He carved out time to be with us every week, including teaching us the value of our Catholic faith by taking us to Mass every Sunday at St. Nicholas of Tolentine in Chicago Lawn. Dad has dinner with me and my siblings and nieces and nephew at least once if not twice per week, and he picks up my nieces and nephew from school once a week to spend time with them.

For as long as I can remember, my dad has pushed me, my siblings and his grandchildren to put all of our efforts into school and work giving our best effort possible. One of his frequent expressions was to tell us to work hard so that we would have as many opportunities as possible. If it were not for my parents, I would not be an attorney. Although I was reluctant to go, given the notoriously difficult workload and long working hours as an attorney, my dad convinced me to go to law school. I had wanted to attend a graduate program instead and he did not dissuade me but offered me the advice that a law degree was something that would give me stability in my career and would always be something that I could fall back on.

I followed his advice and attended Northwestern Law School. He has been the person in my life that has pushed me to keep working hard even when I wanted to give up or did not think I could go on. However it was difficult, and I struggled to motivate myself to continue. In my second year,

I wanted to give up and quit. He would not let me. Rather than challenge my reasons to quit, he persistently spoke with me and had my sister who was already an attorney, and anyone else he could find who had attended law school, persuade me of all the reasons to stay in law school. It worked and I have practiced law for 20 years now.

In my 30s, I suffered serious and at times life-threatening medical problems which my doctors struggled to treat. After years of working 50 to 60-hour weeks as a big law attorney, I had to stop work suddenly, which was debilitating. I never imagined that I would be so ill at such a young age, that I could not work and would have my career taken away. It was the most challenging time of my life. As always, Dad was there for me, calling me nearly every day, having dinner with me every week, pushing me to see different doctors, putting aside his busy schedule to go to doctors' appointments and testing with me. Dad even insisted upon coming with me to a colonoscopy on Election Day even when I told him that he did not need to go. He did not want me to go through these challenging experiences alone. Despite me being exhausted from testing and doctors, he convinced me to go to the Mayo Clinic. He took me there for one week of appointments and testing even though it was during the veto session in November 2014. When my medical conditions responded to treatment, true to what dad had told me 10 years before when I wanted to drop out of law school, my law degree gave me the ability to restart my career in a different area of law. I would not have gotten through that dark chapter of my life without my dad's love, support and guidance.

Dad has given much more to my mom and sister, Lisa. He saved them from my mom's abusive first husband, who was physically and emotionally abusive he repeatedly threatened the life of my mom and grandmother. At a time when many men would not marry a divorced woman, let alone a woman with a child and an aggressive and violent ex-husband, dad married my mom and adopted my sister. Dad defended them against her ex-husband's threats, that continued after my parents married. My mom told me that if it were not for my dad, she did not believe that she or my sister would be alive. My dad is a hero to me for saving them.

My whole life my mom took care of us children and our house while working. However, since the pandemic, she had to stay at home to avoid catching COVID. Like many older people that stayed home to avoid infection, her health rapidly declined from decreased physical and social activity. I have witnessed many of my friends' parents in their 70s and 80s succumb to illnesses that were in check before the pandemic due to having to stay home much like my mom. She is chronically ill, suffering from numerous medical conditions including severe respiratory problems, heart conditions that doctors struggle to control, and debilitating arthritis, rarely leaving the house even for family birthdays. She is at times dependent on oxygen and has difficulty walking up and down stairs. She has been hospitalized repeatedly. Since the pandemic, my dad has been her primary caregiver. He took over doing the laundry, buying groceries, taking her to doctors' appointments, picking up her medications, getting her meals ready, and being the glue that has kept our family together. Despite my mom's deep love for my dad, she was unable to attend the trial except for opening arguments due to her poor health.

He has spent his life devoted to helping all the people of Illinois. People approached my dad all of the time, even when he was eating out with friends and family. To this day, people approach him and tell him about how he helped them or their family members. One story that stood out to me, is that of a young man who approached my dad while he was eating and asked him if he could help

get him a congressional recommendation for a military academy because he wanted to become a fighter pilot. After a brief conversation with him, my dad asked for his phone number and told him he would see what he could do. After the young man left the table, my dad's friend who he was eating with said "I know his family, Mike. They are republicans". My dad told him that it did not matter that the family were republican or that the man lived outside his legislative district, he wanted to help the young man serve our country. Dad helped him get a congressional recommendation, and that man later became a fighter pilot proudly serving in the military.

I have run across so many people that he helped. One person worked at my accountant's office. She called me to get some information to file my tax return and mentioned that her father knew my dad. She went on telling me that she was so grateful to my dad because after her father had retired, he felt a hole in his life after retiring, and he was relieved to have a job again to have something to look forward to each day. Dad often said that it was important that everyone have a job or somewhere to go every day to have a sense of purpose.

He has helped people without them even asking. One person was my law school friend. She had met my dad and they bonded over both of them having attended Notre Dame. After graduating, we went to Barbri class together and studied each morning, and we even agreed that we would check the bar results together. Sadly, while I passed, she did not. I had been anxious for months that I would not pass and was devastated for her. When I told my dad, without me or her asking, he offered for her to work as an issues staffer in Springfield while she studied to re-take the bar exam.

As a politician, dad worked to solve problems for his constituents. As Midway Airport went from a sleepy airfield with few flights in my childhood to a bustling hub for Southwest Airlines, residents that lived nearby complained about the noise from the planes. I have woken up at 5 am in my parents' house to a flight taking off a mile away at Midway, or had to pause my conversation on the phone because I could not hear due to a plane passing overhead. Dad advocated to have the city help residents near both O'Hare and Midway airports to replace their windows with more sound-blocking and energy efficient windows to improve their quality of life, which eventually happened through the Department of Aviation Residential Sound Insulation Program. Some residents complained of a noxious odor emitting from the replacement windows and he again pushed the city to provide non-toxic replacement windows to city residents near the airports. My parents did not take advantage of the program, so I still hear the planes overhead their house when I visit.

The Southwest Side of Chicago has undergone some of the most rapid population growth in Chicago in the past twenty years with mainly families with children moving into the area. Parents constantly complained about the lack of a selective enrollment school despite the large population of children eager to attend school nearby. Children from the Southwest Side, including our neighbor's child, had to commute across the city every day to attend selective enrollment schools through parents dropping them off early before work or making multiple transfers via public transportation. This resonated deeply with my dad because he credited his success coming from his working-class background to his education and encouraged his children to push us to attend the best schools possible to have the greatest number of opportunities. He would voice his frustration frequently to me that these were parents, some of whom do not speak English, from Mexican immigrant families that wanted the best for their children, and he felt that the city was not responding to help these children obtain a better education. He wanted them to have the same

opportunities to achieve and go on to college that he had when he attended St. Ignatius. He worked diligently with the local aldermen and the city to get a selective enrollment high school despite resistance from the Chicago Teachers Union. At last, Hancock College Preparatory High School in Clearing began its transformation to a Selective Enrollment and Career & Technical Education high school in 2015. The demand has outpaced available spots and it has a long wait list.

Dad used his position to help people even when those decisions were not necessarily popular with his constituents or contradicted his own Catholic faith. One instance was his support and lobbying for the successful passage of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act in 2013. While we take same-sex marriage for granted in Illinois now, then it was a very contentious issue particularly with religious people and not politically popular. The Catholic church opposed the bill. The then-Archbishop of Chicago, Francis George, issued a letter stating that allowing same-sex marriage was “acting against the common good of society”, and that “The state has no power to create something that nature itself tells us is impossible”. It took years for the bill to pass and be signed into law from when it was originally introduced.

In March 2013, when the bill came to the House for a vote, there were not enough votes and the bill was tabled and later taken up in the legislative veto session in November 2013. In April 2013, Dad and I had taken a trip to Rome and I remember standing inside the Vatican Museum looking up at the splendor of the Bramante Staircase on Good Friday, when he asked me what I thought about same-sex marriage. I had known my dad to be personally socially conservative in line with his Catholic faith, so I was surprised by his question. I had presumed that he would be against same-sex marriage. Feeling the weight of being at the center of our church, I said that the Catholic church only recognized marriages between men and women, but that people are born just how they are so why shouldn't they have the right to marry? He was silent for a few moments and then said that if one of his children loved someone of the same sex, he would want them to be happy and marry whomever they wanted. A few months later in November, he became active in personally speaking to legislators to push them to vote yes for the bill, making hard pitches to lawmakers that faced opposition amongst their constituents. In a speech that he gave during debate on the house floor, he quoted Pope Francis (who while affirming the traditional position of the church to opposite-sex marriage expressed support for civil unions and later allowed priests to bless same-sex civil marriage ceremonies), saying “Who am I to judge that they should be illegal? Who is the government to judge that they should be illegal, and for me, that's the reason to support this bill”. Despite significant opposition, including in his district, with the leaders of his church in Chicago and threats of not being able to receive communion, he still decided to push for the legislation because he believed that everyone should be treated equally with respect and dignity.

Your Honor, I would ask for leniency for my dad, for the sake of my mother, my nieces and nephew most especially. He holds our family together and it would be a severe hardship to pull him away from my mom and her need for ongoing care for the remaining years that she has left. He has spent his life devoted to helping the people of Illinois. Please consider all of the contributions that he has made to improve the quality and well-being of the residents of Illinois.

Sincerely,



Nicole Madigan

Honorable Judge John Robert Blakey  
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois  
Dirksen Federal Building, Room 1288  
219 South Dearborn Street.  
Chicago IL, 60604

I am writing to provide you with some insight into my father who I strongly look up to because of the example he has provided me over 39 years.

My dad was an active parent, often playing catch with me, driving me to activities, eating dinners together, and maintaining a constant positive presence in my life. Many times I didn't understand how he would do it, but he always made time to show up for school events or activities in spite of his busy schedule. When I went away to college, he would always check in on me and see how things were going. He would often drive to Evanston, in order to have dinner with me and spend some quality time together. My dad is the ultimate family man who cared most about supporting and encouraging his children.

In my early teens, my dad decided to take up golf and we played often. It took me a long time to understand why my dad took up golf because he wasn't particularly good at it. Over time, I came to realize golf provided him an outlet to get away from the stress of his job. And probably most importantly, it enabled him to spend an enormous amount of time with me when we could talk and grow closer without any distractions. My dad never really improved his golf game, but our relationship only grew closer and my appreciation for his love and support is something I will never forget.

I remember one day when I was a kid and he came home from work upset about something that happened in Springfield. Apparently, a legislator lied to him and it created a problem for him. After a while, I asked him "well why don't you just do the same thing back." And he calmly explained to me that life is all about honesty and keeping your word. When you give someone your word, you must live up to it. As I have come to learn in my life over many years and many experiences, my dad is a man of his word. If he says he is going to do something, then I can count on him every time.

What I picked up on over time was his humility. While his profile rose within the State, he never let the attention go to his head. He maintained a relatively small office that I don't think he updated in at least 40 years. It was a few blocks away from our house and he would often have meetings there rather than going downtown. He never felt like he needed to impress anyone. He would always stay grounded and focus on what was important to him, which was spending time with family.

One of my greatest memories was a series of baseball trips that just me and my father took to baseball stadiums across the country. We would try and watch a series in each city so that we could learn about and experience the history and fun things to do in each city while also enjoying the different baseball teams and stadiums. Often times we would drive, leaving just me and my dad to spend hours together talking about life and giving him an opportunity to instill in me the core values he believed in. It was an experience that I will never forget and if I am lucky enough I will do the same with my son one day.

I give you these stories to try and illustrate a man who is deeply committed to his family and caring for others. He spent more time trying to help others and caring about others than he did himself. As I learned more about him through our trips and other times together, my father became my role model. He always has been a selfless, kind, honest, highly ethically, supportive, and loving person. These are traits that I hope to carry on in my life and maybe one day pass down to my children.

Finally, while my father is currently retired, he now spends the majority of his time helping my mother with her various medical needs and appointments. He is her primary caregiver and provides compassionate and attentive care to her in the comfort and safety of their home unlike anyone else would be able to do.

I hope that I have provided some insight into my father and I hope that you take into account the man I know and his selfless dedication to his family and all those around him. Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Andrew Madigan*

Andrew Madigan

March 1, 2025

Judge Blakey,

Hello, my name is John "Jack" Hynes. I have known Mike Madigan my entire life. I grew up less than a block away from the Madigan family, and I lived there until I moved in 2019. My parents were friends with Mike and Shirley, and through the years I developed my own relationships with Mike and Shirley, as well as their children.

I am writing this letter so you can understand a little more about my second father, Mike Madigan. As a fireman I have been put in many difficult situations physically. Writing this letter is one of the most difficult things emotionally that I have ever to deal with, other than the death of my father and my wife's cancer battle. I want to tell you the real story of Mr. Madigan. A man that taught me, along with Shirley and their children, that family is not just blood.

My parents were neighbors and friends with Mr. and Mrs. Madigan. I was young and really did not understand who they were. I would say hello and Mr. Madigan was always polite and playful. On December 11, 1989, at the age of 13, my father died of a heart attack in front of my mom, my sister, and me. That is when I began to understand who Mr. Madigan and his family were as people. Food, clothing, and any other type of assistance was given almost daily. I remember that Mr. Madigan and his family did not just come to the wake and say sorry, then leave. They stayed both days and then went to the funeral as well. I am sure that you have been to wakes and funerals, and the one phrase that is always said, "If you need anything, please don't hesitate to call." We all know that is BS, except to people like Mr. Madigan. 35 years later, and I know that I can count on him or his family if I really needed something. To this day, when I attend wakes and funerals, I do not make the statement above unless I mean it because of what I learned from Mike Madigan.

As stated earlier, I consider the entire Madigan family as my extended family. I have always been closest to Andrew. I think of him as my little brother, and he was the Best Man at my wedding. I am 10 years older than Andrew, so when he was younger, I would sometimes watch him if Mr. and Mrs. Madigan went out or had something to do. What always caught my attention was when Andrew had things to do, such as sports, Mr. Madigan always made time to come see him play. I can remember on numerous occasions; Mr. Madigan was in Springfield and he would make it back in time to come to a basketball or baseball game for Andrew. Keep in mind, I was 10 years older than Andrew and it hit me that this man was busy 24/7 and still making it to his kids' events. When I look back and having my own children, that is the type of father I want to be to my own kids. I want to be the dad that will make every attempt possible to do things for his kids no matter how busy I become. I want to be like Mike Madigan.



I was lucky enough to volunteer time for Mike Madigan. The work included long hours, being able to think quickly, and to work with others. The most interesting thing about the volunteering was that while working, Mike Madigan was there as well. The late hours, the weekends, he would show up and make sure everyone was doing okay. When I wrote progress reports, he would spell check and grammar check my work. (I believe that this letter may have not been written without his grammar assistance.) The work ethic he showed me that I was working with him as well as for him. A true leader shows that he is willing to put the time in and does not just give orders. Mike Madigan's work ethic still influences me today. I work a few jobs and put in a lot of hours, but because of what he taught me I know I can do it and do it well.

Through my years of being a neighbor to the Madigan family, I got to see Shirley and Mike interact with each other. The most important thing I noticed was the true love that Mike had for Shirley. One of the most endearing times that I remember is one evening while eating dinner at Palermo's on 95<sup>th</sup> with my wife, I saw Mike and Shirley across the restaurant. The way he was listening and completely devoted to Shirley was a beautiful site to see. It showed pure devotion to one another. It showed me what a couple should be to each other. After all those years of marriage he still looked at her with pure love. I hope I can still show that love to my wife later in our life.

Actions always speak louder than words. As stated previously in this letter, my father passed when I was 13 years old. I love my father and still miss him to this day; he taught me a lot in those 13 years but some things still needed to be taught and Mike Madigan was the one who helped me be a man.

- Mike Madigan showed me how to be a good father by his actions with his children
- Mike Madigan taught me that work ethic is very important in life
- Mike Madigan showed me how to treat the women you love

These qualities helped mold me into the man I am today. His actions taught me so much that I will always be grateful for everything he has done for me.

Besides assisting me in my personal life, he also assisted me in many aspects of my life. When I left college to join the fire department, he made me promise him that I would go back and get my degree. As he stated to me, "Even if you never use it, you will have it for your kids, and it will make your mom proud." Approximately 8 years later I did go back to DePaul University and receive my BA in Political Science. Having Mike Madigan to interview on political issues made those papers much easier to write. He was 100% correct that it made my mom proud. I have a degree that no one can take away from me.

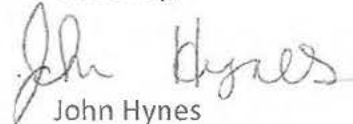
Everyone in life hits bumps in their personal life. In June 2021, almost four years ago I was completely blindsided. My wife went in for a colonoscopy and 30 minutes later, I was told to come back because the doctor wanted to speak with both of us. He informed my wife and I that she

had cancer, and she needed to have emergency surgery because time is not on her side. My wife, Meg, and I never even had a chance to digest and talk about it. We were back at the hospital that night and surgery closely followed. While my wife was being wheeled out of the room for surgery and not completely understanding everything, the first phone call I received was from Mike Madigan. He was reassuring me that his family and him are there for anything, everything was going to be okay. He did not just call once; he followed up asking about Meg's status. He is a very busy man but still took the time to check in and that will never be forgotten.

This is the most difficult part of my letter. I have explained how much Mike Madigan has meant to me, but it was not just me he has been kind and generous to...he has helped my entire family as well. That is what hurts me the most. My brother Brian, who Mike Madigan has helped tremendously throughout his life, came up in the trial in regards to Danny Solis. I do not know the full extent of his role, if any, but it just hurts. My brother is my brother and nothing can be done about that, but as I stated earlier in this letter...Mike Madigan and his family have shown me that family is more than blood. I am proud to call Mike Madigan my dad. Another testament to Mike Madigan and his family is that through all of this, the Madigan family never treated me any different.

In conclusion, Mike Madigan is not just a friend or neighbor to me, he is family. I have learned so much from him, and he has shown me so much guidance and love.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Hynes".

John Hynes

March 2, 2025

Judge Blakey,

Hello, my name is Lily Hynes. I am a sophomore at St. Laurence High School. Mike Madigan and my family have been extremely close for as long as my own father's childhood. I consider him a grandfather, and I also consider his wife; my grandmother, his kids; my aunts and uncle.

I am writing this letter to help you better understand Mike Madigan from the eyes of someone who he has positively impacted. We live in a day and age where our characters and who we are can easily be swayed by the words of others. I hope that by the end of reading this you have a better understanding of who Mike Madigan is outside of a political figure.

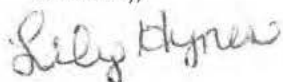
He has been an impactful figure throughout my whole life. I remember him from when I was young at family gatherings and events, he never spoke much but he always had a kind smile on his face. Last year, my grandfather on my mother's side passed away on February 13th. It was a very sad time for my household and brought about lots of chaos. I was to recite one of the eulogies that I had written. This was an extremely new experience, and while I had never struggled with public speaking, this was obviously very different. My sister is a lot closer with my mom's side of the family than I am, so I felt a bit nervous. I remember seeing Mike Madigan there, and I was confused at first. I do not believe he personally knew my grandfather, he did not really have relationships with anybody in my mother's family except my mother, and I was indeed aware of how extremely busy he was. I was glad to know that there was someone in the audience who wasn't my family just because we were blood related, but someone who was my family because he cared.

Months later I realized why he showed up; he showed up because there were people, he cared about that were struggling, and he wanted to be there for those people. He did not have to be there; he wanted to be there. I know that I have years upon years ahead of me, and while I may not be the wisest person, I do know that going tremendously out of your way to make sure people feel loved when they need it defines a good person. That is what defines Mike Madigan.

He has not only helped me, but so many other people in my family including my own father and his mother. He has helped them become better people, and therefore helped me grow into a better person.

Mike Madigan is an honorable father, grandfather, husband, and most importantly...an honorable and good man.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lily Hynes". The ink is dark and the writing is fluid, with a large loop on the "L" and a trailing flourish at the end.

Lily Hynes

Dear Judge Blakey, Thank you for this opportunity to tell you of my esteem for Michael Madigan.

I became acquainted with Michael in the late 1980s, at the beginning of my long career in arts administration. I worked at the Illinois Arts Council, the agency I eventually led as Executive Director and as Chair. I admired and appreciated Michael's steadfast support for arts funding here in Chicago and across all of Illinois. Eventually, my job responsibilities involved testifying at legislative budgetary hearings. Despite his very busy schedule, Michael was always generous with his time, offering thoughtful and deft advice on how to approach what were for me—at least initially—intimidating occasions.

However, when I think about what Michael's kindness and friendship really means to me, my thoughts stray far from Springfield, government, and career. I came to Chicago in 1959 as a young bride, from the small city of Fall River, Massachusetts, where I was born and raised. With its shuttered mills and abandoned factories, my New England hometown was a world away from the Near North side, where my husband and I rented our first apartment. Having spent all the ensuing decades since in the city and on the North Shore, it's only rarely that am I reminded that I'm not a native. However, there have been painful times when that fact catches me short, causing sadness and feelings of being very far away from home. I'm thinking in particular of the death of first my father and then my

mother—both still back in Fall River, and later of my beloved husband Daniel M. Pierce of Highland Park.

On those occasions Michael Madigan's friendship has been tremendously meaningful to me. The kindness he and his family extended to me – phone calls and notes just to check in on me while I grieved, care packages of food and flowers, invitations to spend evenings with them, all lifted my spirits and telegraphed love during these periods of great loss.

That thoughtfulness and compassion meant the world to me and in my opinion defines who Michael is. These qualities are most evident in the care he provides for his wife Shirley, who is 82 years old, in poor health and very dependent on him. I am glad to share my feelings with you and pray that you'll consider them when determining his sentence.

Sincerely,

Rhoda A. Pierce

Craig P. Willert



May 8, 2025

Honorable John Robert Blakey  
United States District Court

Re: Michael J. Madigan

Dear Judge Blakely:

I know you learned a lot about Michael Madigan during the trial. I am writing to Your Honor to share personal insights about Mike that I developed over the course of working for him for over ten years. I am doing so because I greatly admire, respect and look up to Michael Madigan. I hope that this will help Your Honor gain additional insight to the type of man he truly is.

I first met Mike when I started working in his Pulaski Street office in 2011. I had no political pedigree. I nor anyone else in my family had ever worked in Illinois politics. I had no connections whatsoever. In Chicago parlance, I am “the nobody that nobody sent.” But as I testified during the trial, a year after graduating from college with a degree in communications, I saw an ad for a low-level data entry position while searching for opportunities in Illinois specific to government and politics. I applied online, got an interview and to my surprise I got the job. I gradually worked my way up the ladder and was rewarded for my strong work ethic and effectiveness each step of the way.

I continued that trend until Mike named me the Political Director for the Illinois Speaker of the House in January of 2017. No inside track. No special treatment. Just recognition of my talent and hard work. I tell that story because it breaks down the inaccurate image I think many people have about Mike. He rewarded me not because of who I knew, but only because of my hard work, radical honesty and commitment.

There are many things I came to admire about Mike as I got to know him through the years. One thing many people don’t know about him is he invited disagreement. He encouraged it. He wanted honest opinions. He didn’t want “yes” people. He wanted people to speak their mind, even if it ran counter to his opinion – especially if it ran counter to his opinion. Debate over issues and strategic decisions was encouraged. He wanted the truth, even if it was hard to hear. I will always admire and respect Mike Madigan for that.

I remember one time we were talking about certain elected officials who were known to misrepresent facts. He said that he never understood why they lied because doing so can create too many landmines to navigate and keep track of. He always said it's much easier to just tell the truth because then you never have to worry about stepping on one of those mines. That story and that lesson have stuck with me ever since. It's something I continue to live by, both personally and professionally.

Too often, showing vulnerability is considered a sign of weakness and asking for help is an indication that one may not be "up for the job." When I first became political director, that's how I felt, too. Be tough. Hide your emotions. But I struggled with mental issues and when I worked up the courage to tell Mike I was simply in awe of the incredible empathy and compassion he showed me.

In the summer of 2018, I finally sought help for my mental struggles. I was diagnosed with moderate depression and anxiety. I began taking medication and seeing a therapist, working through a whole host of issues while also trying to get to a safe and secure place where I felt comfortable. At that point, I was living in Springfield. Having been born and raised in Chicago, Springfield was not my cup of tea. I was 30 years old and single. I didn't have any friends outside of the office and my closest friends and family were three hours away in Chicago. Simply put, I was really hurting.

Following the November election in 2018, I decided that for the betterment of my mental health, I needed to move back to Chicago, regardless of the consequences. Closer to friends and family and an environment where I could thrive mentally. Prior to myself, no Political Director had ever done the job while living outside of Springfield. It was a reasonable requirement that you had to live there, and so naturally I was afraid of the consequences should I make the request.

One day in the fall of 2018, I sat down with the Speaker and told him about the mental issues I was struggling with and that I felt that I needed to move back to Chicago. I told him I understood what that meant in regards to my job but that I was OK with whatever decision he made. Without hesitation Mike encouraged me to move back home, in fact he insisted on it. He expressed sincere empathy for what I was going through and said that we'll work through whatever logistical challenges come with the move. He told me a personal story about someone close to him who also struggled with anxiety and depression and said he was happy that I opened up to him. He told me that he would do whatever was necessary to make sure I properly addressed my mental health. I am so grateful to Mike. I will never forget how kind and gentle and supportive Mike was to me during the darkest period of my life.

It may not seem like a big deal, but so many people have an inaccurate image of Mike Madigan being a ruthless, emotionless and down-right heartless person, but as the result of the many years that I had the privilege of working with him I know that, in fact, he is the exact opposite.

I will always hold the utmost respect and admiration for Mike. He has helped shape me into the man I am today. He showed me the importance of always being truthful. He rewarded me, a nobody that nobody sent, for my hard work. He helped me during one of the lowest times in my life.

Thank you for your time reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Craig Willert



April 24, 2025

Hon. John Robert Blakey  
U.S. District Court for the  
Northern District of Illinois  
219 S Dearborn Street  
Courtroom 1203  
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Blakey,

I am writing to you today as an employee and friend of Michael Madigan regarding his upcoming sentencing hearing. I have had the pleasure of working for the office of Michael Madigan for over 25 years. I started as a teenager, still unsure of where I was going in life; and because of his influence, professionally and personally, have become a decent, well grounded, kind hearted adult. I was taught from day one that we do everything by the book around the ward office. It was instilled in me to help others when we could and to always be truthful and honest. Mr. Madigan ingrained in me and his employees that no political work be done during government time, that our timesheets are always accurate and that we show up to work every day. In June of 2024, I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. I went through 20 rounds of radiation and never missed a day of work during treatment. Good work ethic was something I learned from working closely with Mr. Madigan.

I have gotten to know Mr. Madigan over the years and he is a kind and compassionate individual. I would not be the person I am today if it were not for this man. Everything good in me I have learned by watching him. I have watched him help constituents in any and every way he possibly could. I witnessed countless people in need reach out for help, some about to lose their job, some about to lose their home and he would always try to assist in any way he could. I have personally seen and read hundreds of letters come in thanking him for things he has done over the years to help others. They always made me so proud to work for him. I was able to see firsthand, that there truly are good people who are willing to help others. I have observed him pick up food and drop it off, over and over again, for a man who lives down the street and has no family.

During his trial, I have watched him stay patient in situations that most would lose their temper. With all the scrutiny of the media he never let it get to him; day after day, coming in with a "good morning". He always asked how I was as if nothing was happening. There are times in my own life, I reflect on those moments and ask myself how would Mr. Madigan react? I have undoubtedly avoided confrontation with family and friends after witnessing his demeanor time and time again which in turn has saved a lot of my personal relationships.

Mr. Madigan is an amazing husband and father. The level of care and concern he shows his wife and children on a daily bases is truly extraordinary. Mrs. Madigan is not in the best of health and she relies on him for medication pick up, grocery shopping and doctor visits. He lives a very reserved life. They don't have fancy upgrades in their home or flashy cars. He is not this money hungry person they paint him to be. Mr. Madigan is just the opposite. I even had to talk him into a smart tv (only a 32 in) to watch the Notre Dame games on because the TVs in their home from the 80s and he was unable to get some of the games. He is a simple man who just enjoys a good book and dinners with his children and grandchildren, and of course Notre Dame football games.

One story I would like to share is a little personal. I was raised in a home where not everyone got along. My Dad is a retired Chicago police officer who was tough on us to say the least. My older brother and him did not always see eye to eye. This broke my Mom's heart as well as mine. My brother wanted to get away and attend West Point for college. He thought that would be a good fit for him since he had no money for college and things weren't great at home. Mike Madigan helped make that a reality for him. Mr. Madigan never asked us for anything in return, just wanted to help a neighborhood kid out who truly needed it and I am proud to say my brother went on to graduate from West Point in 1997. My parents ended up divorcing which was best for everyone.

Looking back, I probably acted up a bit as a teenager and young adult due to things in my personal life but then came the summer job I never left. In a way it grounded me, taught me responsibility, how to help others, which felt good. 28 years later I am still trying to help others. I am far from perfect but there is no doubt I am a better human being, raising 2 good human beings, because of Mike Madigan. I ask that you please consider all these amazing things he is when determining his sentence and I thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

April Burgos

Mary Morrissey



May 19, 2025

The Honorable Robert Blakey  
Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse  
219 South Dearborn Street, Room 1288  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Judge Blakey:

I am writing to ask for your consideration of the long history of compassion and kind acts that Michael Madigan has done over his lifetime and in particular during his years of service as a state representative. I have had a front row seat to many of those kind acts including the kindness and compassion that he expressed to my family after a devastating loss.

Just a bit about how I came to know Mr. Madigan and the Madigan family. I grew up in the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward in Chicago. My parents were not involved in politics and did not have political connections. My Dad was an airline mechanic and my Mother a stay-at-home mom. They taught us about standing up to injustice and helping those that had less than we did. Those guiding principles and the social justice teachings at Lourdes High School drove me to pursue an undergraduate degree in political science so that I could tackle the problems that I saw in the world at a systemic level. Unfortunately, when I graduated, I had neither family nor political connections to get a start in politics or government despite serving as President of College Democrats at Illinois State University. In 1983, I asked Mr. Madigan, my state representative, for a letter of support for my application for the Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program operated by Sangamon State University (now University of Illinois Springfield) which he provided. With his support, I began a 17-year career as a legislative staff person working on the staff of the House Democratic caucus, rising from intern to Special Assistant to the Speaker. During that long period, I had the privilege to closely observe Mr. Madigan's kindness and dedication to his constituents and people of the State of Illinois.

During my tenure, I served in many different roles but the one in which I worked closest with him was during the 1990s when I served as Special Assistant to the Speaker. In that role, I worked closely with him on projects and constituent services which were always his first priority. At a district wide level, he established a tracking system for every request received by his office. Some were larger projects like the renovation of a vacant block into a baseball field for a local little league and the redevelopment of vacant property on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street as subsidized senior housing. Some were smaller ongoing projects like the program to enlist the city inspectors and the courts to secure and rehabilitate abandoned and dangerous residential and commercial buildings in the community and ensuring that potholes and collapsed sewers were repaired.


But the requests that he took most seriously were those individual requests from people in need who had nowhere else to turn. I remember clearly him giving me a copy of a napkin with a name and number on it from someone who had approached him at a restaurant and another time it was a note from someone who stopped him at the grocery store asking him to help them with a family member. He would ask me to call them and work on resolving their issue. And he would carry around a copy of the request in a folder, back and forth to Springfield, until the matter was resolved. And if the request uncovered a problem with a private or government office, he would use those cases to advance changes in state law.

The most powerful and personal example of his compassion and humanity stems from the most difficult time in my life. In 1997, my 28 year-old sister was killed in a car accident; she hit a pothole at 73<sup>rd</sup> and Kedzie in Chicago, went into oncoming traffic and was killed. For me, my family, and especially her twin-sister, this sudden loss shattered our worlds. During this very difficult time, he and his wife Shirley went above and beyond to support our family – not only did they bring the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward staff and volunteers to the services, notify other elected officials about the loss, but he postponed the start of the legislative session that week so that he and Shirley could attend the wake and funeral. Even further, Mike and Shirley continued to support my family in many ways – even giving my late sister's twin a ride home from law school once a week for months.

And ours was not the only family that felt their warmth and support during difficult times. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of families across the state were touched by Mr. Madigan's kindness at the most difficult times in their lives. For example, when a neighbor passed away suddenly leaving behind four school-age children, Mike helped look out for the sons and mentored them through school and into their careers.

I apologize for not being able to give you the names of the many, many, many people that he has helped throughout his career without requesting anything in return, but I hope that my letter gives you a sense of the depth and breadth of the kindness and compassion that he has demonstrated during the time that I have known him. I hope that you will consider this letter as you make your sentencing decision in the coming weeks and that you will show him compassion and leniency in light of his many years of making a difference in the lives of the people of our state.

Sincerely,



Mary Morrissey



Honorable Judge Robert Blakey  
United States District Court  
219 S. Dearborn  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Judge Blakey,

My name is Michael Sacks, and I write to you with deep respect to request leniency in the sentencing of Michael J. Madigan. Having come to know Speaker Madigan well, and having observed his leadership and personal character up close over many years, I am confident that he is deserving of, and justice is served by, the greatest degree of leniency and mercy you can extend.

### **Background of My Relationship with Michael Madigan**

The origins of my relationship with and deep respect for Speaker Madigan are both improbable and ironic. My substantive involvement with the Speaker began at the request of Governor Bruce Rauner, who asked me to help him bridge a divide with the Illinois General Assembly Democratic leadership.

At that time, in the summer of 2015, Governor Rauner was a personal friend. My wife and I socialized with him and his wife, Diana, and I had worked closely with him on various civic projects. We had traveled together. My relationship with Speaker Madigan was, until then, only casual, stemming from a childhood friend who had worked for his extraordinary wife, Shirley. Our interactions were infrequent and brief, mostly at our mutual friends' lifecycle events. I think it is relevant that I came to my working relationship with Speaker Madigan as "Rauner's guy."

In 2015, when Governor Rauner asked for my candid assessment of his performance after the state failed to pass a budget, I gave him my honest opinion. I pointed out several self-inflicted mistakes and offered suggestions for a path forward that would be good for Illinois and good for the Governor. To my surprise, the Governor called shortly after we met and said, "Thank you for that. I needed to hear it. You're a commie but I trust you. I want you to help me get a budget deal." I agreed, with the caveat that Speaker Madigan and the Senate President welcomed my involvement. They were open to it, and I began working – at significant personal effort and expense – to bring the parties together.

I cannot overstate the time and energy I invested in these efforts. I met with Speaker Madigan and his staff countless times, as well as with the Governor and his team and the Senate President and his team. There were confidential meetings with the principals, carefully arranged to avoid public attention. I witnessed firsthand the dynamic between Speaker Madigan and Governor Rauner as they worked through complex issues. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to help broker a budget agreement in the back half of 2015 or in 2016 – an outcome I consider one of my greatest personal failures.

What you do not know is that after working as hard as I possibly could, after getting to the goal line numerous times only to have defeat snatched from the jaws of victory, I told Governor Rauner that I could no longer assist him as I had concluded that he was the primary obstacle to compromise, and that I was going to continue to try to help the Democratic leadership to carry the state forward. In 2017, the Governor's own party ultimately concluded the same and overrode his veto to pass a budget, ending one of the longest fiscal impasses in U.S. history.

Through this process, I came to know Speaker Madigan both as a person and as a leader. Based on this intense comprehensive experience, I can say with complete confidence that Michael Madigan

deserves your mercy. He does not deserve to be in prison, and justice would not be served by a prison sentence. I respectfully ask you to consider the following:

### **A Devoted Husband, Father and Grandfather**

While he may not be known for outward displays of warmth, those who truly know Mike Madigan see his tender, caring side. He is a devoted husband to his wonderful wife, Shirley, who has faced significant health challenges. He has been her primary caregiver, and his love and dedication to her are deeply moving. She will undoubtedly suffer if he is unable to continue in this role. He is a loving father and grandfather whose family will suffer in his absence.

### **A Compassionate and Caring Friend**

Mike Madigan's decency and compassion are genuine. He reached out to me when I lost my father and with his experience helped me through a difficult time. He regularly makes time to check in on my mother. Despite the immense pressures he faces, he consistently takes time to support friends and colleagues in times of need. There have been numerous times over the last years and months when I have been touched by an act of his kindness or concern in light of the stress he has faced. I am certain that many others appealing to you will echo this sentiment.

### **A Man of His Word**

Speaker Madigan is renowned for two things – his careful use of words and, more importantly, for his unwavering commitment to keeping his word. In Springfield, it was well known: if Speaker Madigan gave you his word, he kept it. His integrity was never questioned, even by his fiercest opponents. They may have battled with him on the issues, but they never accused him of lying. I believe his cautiousness in making commitments stemmed from his deep sense of responsibility to honor them.

### **An Exemplary Work Ethic**

Having built a business in an industry known for demanding work, I can attest that Speaker Madigan is among the hardest-working individuals I have ever encountered. Throughout his entire career he worked extraordinarily long hours. He worked at night and on weekends. His dedication to constituent services was unmatched. If we had that same level of effort and organization across the city and state we would no doubt be better off. There is also no doubt that Speaker Madigan's work ethic drove his success – this is a point missed by those who seek to paint his strength and accomplishments as the result of inappropriate conduct.

### **Leadership Rooted in Consistency and Fairness**

Being Speaker is not akin to being a chief executive; it requires managing a diverse caucus and balancing countless interests. Speaker Madigan's approach was rooted in consistent process and procedure, treating people with integrity and fairness at all times. He avoided outright refusals when possible, as he understood public servants' obligation to both hear and consider concerns important to all constituents. It is this approach that led many to believe they were influencing him when, in reality, his listening or engagement was part of his larger, polite and principled process.

### **A Values-Driven Advocate for the Vulnerable**

There are some who view Speaker Madigan's leadership as rooted in his desire for power, but I witnessed the opposite. The Speaker Madigan I saw in battle first hand was a Speaker who was driven by his desire to speak for and protect those without power. Throughout my work on the

budget, I saw Speaker Madigan's unwavering commitment to protecting social services and defending the rights of working men and women. He fought passionately against efforts to cut support for the poor and vulnerable.

The Speaker stood firm when the Governor threatened funding for heating oil subsidies for the poor at Christmas in Chicago. When the Governor proposed cutting funding for shelters for battered women, the Speaker fought back. And when the Governor wanted to lower prevailing wage requirements for construction workers and make changes that limited workers' ability to organize, Speaker Madigan worked to defeat those measures too.

His values were clear, and his leadership undoubtedly protected millions of Illinoisans. Too often it seems elected officials forget why they ran for office in the first place, or get caught up in the trappings of political office. Speaker Madigan never forgot. He has lived a simple life that defies most people's view of a powerful political leader. Most importantly, he never failed to meet his obligation to protect those who couldn't protect themselves.

### **A Reluctant Target, a Loyal Defender**

During the intense political battles with Governor Rauner, Speaker Madigan became the focus of relentless negative campaigning, with millions of dollars spent on painting Mike Madigan as the leader of "corrupt Democrats." He chose not to defend himself, instead dedicating campaign resources to support other Democrats.

This selflessness, while noble, took a toll on his personal reputation. This man who spent his career protecting people who were under assault – who even former Republican Governors praised – had his personal reputation torn down by the enormous amount of money spent by Governor Rauner and a small number of key supporters. That negative branding was powerful and pervasive. It shifted broad public opinion about Speaker Madigan. And it is hard to believe that in some way it did not contribute, directly or indirectly, to the circumstances he now faces.

### **A True Public Servant**

In my experience, Speaker Madigan is the antithesis of the caricature painted by his detractors. He is a fundamentally decent family man, a kind and loyal friend, and a dedicated and compassionate public servant who gave his very best his entire adult life for the people of Illinois. He succeeded through honesty, intelligence, values, and work ethic. He was attacked mercilessly for standing up for his beliefs, and he has suffered greatly as a result.

### **A Humble Request for Mercy**

Speaker Madigan deserves to spend his remaining years at home, caring for his wife and family. I respectfully and humbly ask that you show mercy to this good and decent man – a man who has given so much to his state and its people, protecting and enhancing the quality of life for millions.

I believe this request is consistent with justice and is the right and decent thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Michael J. Sacks

May 13, 2025

Dear Judge Blakey,

Prior to my retirement in 2022, I was President of SEIU Local 1 and the President of the SEIU Illinois State Council. I served as President of both organizations for over 25 years. SEIU Local 1 represents over 50,000 Property Service workers in Chicago and five other Midwest cities. The Illinois State Council is SEIU's political arm representing over 150,000 healthcare, property service and Public employees.

In my capacity as the leader of SEIU I interacted and worked with Mike Madigan many times over the years.

In the early 2000's Mike Madigan played a crucial role in helping our union pass legislation establishing employment standards for Home Healthcare workers and Home Child Care workers. These workers play a vital role in the delivery of Home Care and Child Care in Illinois. They were amongst the lowest paid, often working minimum wage. With the Act, we were able to move these jobs to living wage jobs with better training standards.

The lives of over 90,000 workers have changed dramatically. Their work has become more stable and their livelihoods more sustainable. The hundreds of thousands of who need their services also benefited from a more stable and better trained workforce. Mike Madigan supported this legislation and was crucial to getting it enacted into law.

In 2006, our Union led a major legislative/political campaign to raise the minimum wage in Illinois. There was significant opposition from the business community, making for a complicated legislative process. During our campaign I had numerous conversations with Mike Madigan. These were frank conversations on what we could and couldn't compromise on. It was important that we could trust what we said to each other. Mike Madigan was able to strike a compromise. We achieved what we needed, a \$1.00 increase in the minimum wage, and the business community got a longer ramp of 25 cents a year.

The compromise we reached was the legislative process at its best. Mike Madigan worked hard to get us to this compromise. He was the gear that made it all work and thousands of Illinois workers were the beneficiaries.



I would describe my relationship with Mike Madigan as a good relationship. It wasn't a good relationship because we agreed on everything, which we didn't, or even that we necessarily liked each other, which we did, but it was a good relationship because it was a credible relationship. In my dealings with him, Mike Madigan was an honest and reliable person. I could trust what he told me.

In my over 30 years of interacting with Mike Madigan, whether on big things or small things, I don't believe he ever lied to me. In my experience Mike Madigan has been trustworthy.

I hope you will take these comments into consideration in your sentencing.

Sincerely,

Thomas Balanoff

President Emeritus

SEIU Local 1

April 10, 2025

The Honorable John Robert Blakey  
United States District Court  
219 South Dearborn Street, Courtroom 1203  
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: Mike Madigan

Dear Judge Blakey:

I am writing on behalf of Mike Madigan, who is facing legal proceedings which may result in his incarceration. I have known Mike professionally and personally for over four decades.

Few public servants have shaped the course of Illinois policy and progress as extensively as Mike Madigan. Over the course of more than five decades in office, Mr. Madigan played a central role in crafting the very policy framework that continues to protect and improve the lives of millions of Illinoisans today. From education reform to workers' rights, from infrastructure investment to public healthcare access, and to equality in marriage, his role was instrumental in nearly every major piece of legislation passed during his time in office.

The first policy discussion I recall having with Mike was about the Scaffold Act, a law that, at the time, provided additional remedies for workers injured or killed from falls on ladders or scaffolding. While many lobbying interests argued that existing OSHA regulations and workers' compensation laws offered sufficient protection for workers, Mike held a different view. Drawing on his deep understanding of the construction trades and the risks faced by largely blue-collar, often first- and second-generation workers in those fields, he believed passionately that the State of Illinois had a moral obligation to maintain stronger safeguards. In his eyes, the Scaffold Act was not just policy—it was a statement of values, ensuring that contractors who cut corners with workers' lives would face real consequences.

In the decades-long fight for gay and lesbian equality in Illinois, I came to understand that politics is, indeed, the art of the possible. Throughout that struggle, Mike Madigan demonstrated extraordinary leadership, masterfully keeping his majority coalition intact despite a caucus that included members with deeply divergent views on LGBTQ rights.

While our movement was broad and determined and made up of LGBTQ individuals, allies, and advocacy organizations fighting for non-discrimination and, ultimately, marriage equality, I firmly believe it was Speaker Madigan's courage and quiet commitment that made those victories

possible. Under his leadership, Illinois became one of the first states in the nation to pass marriage equality through the legislature—not by court mandate, but by democratic vote.

Though I'm not a lawyer, I believe that legislative milestone in Illinois played a meaningful role in shaping the national conversation that led to the Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. It showed that equality could be achieved not just through litigation, but through the democratic process thanks in large part to leaders like Mike Madigan who were willing to stand up when it mattered most. Ultimately, Mike Madigan's efforts on behalf of marriage equality had a profound impact—not only on the quality of life for countless individuals and families in Illinois, but also on the national momentum that ultimately led to broader recognition of LGBTQ rights across the country.

Over the course of at least four decades, I've come to know Mike and Shirley Madigan—not closely, but as one among the many thousands of constituents, allies, and friends whose lives they've quietly touched. I've observed them as a devoted couple, true pillars of strength for each other, particularly in recent years as Shirley has faced serious health challenges. In light of their bond, their age, and Mike's lifetime of public service, I respectfully ask Your Honor to consider an act of mercy for a man who, across 82 years, has given so much of himself in service to others.

I am available to provide any additional information or answer any questions you may have. Thank you for considering my letter.

Sincerely,

Fred Eychaner

Hon. Robert Blakey  
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois  
219 S. Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Judge Blakey,

I am writing in regard to the upcoming sentencing hearing of Mike Madigan. I served as State Representative of the 13<sup>th</sup> District from 2006 until 2023. I was called as a witness in Mr. Madigan's trial and the Government called me as a background witness in other related trials. I say this only to indicate I am aware of the basics of the allegations underlying the charges he was convicted of. I am not writing to you about the facts of his case, but rather to share a little of my professional experience with Mr. Madigan on consequential issues of public importance, and specifically to discuss the times that Mr. Madigan used his position and influence as the Speaker to advance major LGBTQ rights legislation at a critical juncture in the national marriage equality movement.

When I joined the House of Representatives at the end of 2006, one of the first things I did was meet with then Speaker Madigan to let him know that one of my and my constituents' top priorities was to pass a marriage equality law in Illinois. At the time marriage equality was legal in just a handful of states, and the debates about the issue nationwide were extremely hard fought and emotionally charged, with powerful forces on both sides.

Speaker Madigan listened carefully to my discussion of the issue, had several substantive questions about the interplay of the constitutional issues of equal rights and religious freedom, and talked about the strength of opposition the effort would face, as well as his view of the political landscape for it in different parts of the state. He also told me to keep him informed on the progress of our organizing and lobbying efforts and offered at that first meeting that he would help with the effort whenever he could.

In February of 2007, I introduced a marriage equality bill for the first time and began the work to educate my legislative colleagues and build support. I continued to file that legislation and work with advocates and allies on the issue every year. Mr. Madigan was always helpful with my efforts. The battles were emotional and hard fought by both proponents and opponents. In November of 2010, Illinois took the first step and the General Assembly approved SB1716, the Civil Union Act, by a very close vote with Mr. Madigan both supporting the bill and voting 'yes' when it came up for a vote that year.

The work on full marriage equality continued, and 3 years later in 2013 we were ready for a vote of full marriage equality for our State, one of only 11 states able to do it legislatively, without judicial intervention. The hope was for the bill to pass the House on the final day of the Spring Session, but at the last minute, opponents of the bill were able to pull off some Representatives who had previously indicated they would be 'yes' votes, and consequently I did not call the bill for a vote.

Both sides ramped up their efforts around Illinois in grassroots organizing, politics and advocacy. Strong voices from the business, labor and faith communities weighed in, both for and against the marriage equality law, as did community leaders and editorial boards across the state. In the 2013 Fall Session, the proponents thought we were close enough again to succeed. Speaker Madigan actively assisted in advancing the bill and to get it to a final vote. In the final days leading up to the vote, Mr. Madigan personally lobbied several members who were on the fence or nervous about their vote and was able to convince them to remain solid 'yes' votes. He also stood and spoke to the House in support of the bill, quoting from the late Pope Francis as a further message of support. He could have sat on the sidelines of this controversial issue, but instead he actively supported it and did what he thought was right.

Mr. Madigan's steady support for this incredibly important – and politically complicated – effort was critical to the eventual passage of the Marriage Equality Act in 2013. His efforts over the years, including his work to get the bill to final passage, is one example of Mr. Madigan using the influence of his position as Speaker to accomplish what I believe was a truly laudable public goal, and he did so because he believed it was the right thing to do.

I ask that you take into account all the good things that Mr. Madigan helped to accomplish for the citizens of Illinois over his years as Speaker, and not just the misdeeds that were the focus at his trial, when you consider the appropriate sentence.

Thank you for considering this letter.

Sincerely,

*Greg Harris*

Former Representative Greg Harris

Richard A. Devine

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Honorable John Robert Blakey  
United States District Court  
Northern District of Illinois  
Dirksen Federal Building  
219 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
60604

**Re: Michael J. Madigan**

Dear Judge Blakey:

I am writing to provide my personal insight into the career of Michael Madigan to assist you in the sentencing in his case.

I have known Michael Madigan for several decades, as we were both involved in government and politics. I served as an administrative aide to Mayor Richard J. Daley from 1969-72; as First Assistant State's Attorney from 1980-83; as President of the Chicago Park District in the early 1990s; and as State's Attorney of Cook County from 1996-2008.

My primary interactions with Michael Madigan were when I served as State's Attorney of Cook County. Two matters in particular reflect his approach to dealing with our office and the criminal justice system.

I took office in 1996, and the first important initiative in our office was the Juvenile Justice Reform Act. The purpose of the proposal was to establish in Illinois the concept of balanced and restorative justice. The object was to focus on outcomes in juvenile cases that would assist the victim, the community and the juvenile offender in dealing with the consequences of the crime charged. For example, a young person charged with painting graffiti on a garage might be required to apologize to the owner and repaint the garage while also engaging in counselling rather than serving time in a juvenile facility.

In 1997, a number of people from our office went to Springfield to advocate for this new approach. Needless to say, there was some substantial opposition to the proposal. Speaker Madigan met with us and reviewed the substance of the legislation in some detail. He had obviously reviewed the materials with his staff in some detail.

We had a productive meeting, and he agreed to support the proposal. At all times, he focused on the merits of the legislation and how it would affect the community and the criminal justice system.

Once on board, he never waffled or played games based on any political considerations. He was, as he has always been in my dealings with him, a man of his word. As I'm sure you know, this is not always the case in politics or life in general.



Several years later, the Illinois Supreme Court invalidated a number of criminal justice laws because the original bill violated the single subject rule. This created a major challenge for the criminal justice system, as several of the laws were important parts of the process.

A number of prosecutors, including myself, went to Springfield in an effort to restore the key laws that had been affected by the Court's decision. I met with Speaker Madigan a number of times and his main request was that the Republicans and Democrats get together and create a package of bills that would rectify the problems. I spent several days in Springfield working with the Attorney General and others to do so.

At all times, Speaker Madigan's focus was on the substance of what we were doing. There was no consideration of political advantage or personal advancement in any of his dealings with me. As before, once he made a commitment, you could rely on him to keep it. With the Speaker's leadership, we were able to restore legislation that had been lost.

During my twelve years as State's Attorney, I oversaw our legislative efforts on an ongoing basis. My experience with the Speaker on the Juvenile Reform Act and the criminal justice bills was essentially his approach to all our initiatives. He was interested in the substance of the bills and how things would impact the criminal justice system and the community. He did not play games. If he opposed what we were doing, he told us and gave us the reasons. If he was supportive, he did all he could to move the proposal forward.

He never asked for anything to secure his support. As always, his commitment, once given, was good to the end.

As the elected State's Attorney, I also dealt with Mike Madigan when I was involved in a campaign. The most important of those was in 1996 when I first ran for State's Attorney. When I embarked on that venture, I was very much an underdog because I would be running against a popular incumbent, Jack O'Malley.

I visited with almost all the Democratic political leaders to secure their support. To be honest, there wasn't much competition for the Democratic nomination because very few people thought O'Malley could be defeated. I won the Democratic primary without opposition.

The general election was a different matter. I was way behind in the polls from the start, and many of the party's leaders were not anxious to secure the enmity of the incumbent.

Mike Madigan was the exception. He supported my candidacy from the start, and never wavered in that support. He was an important part of the campaign because he was the leader of the Democratic party in Illinois. He included me in all the major efforts to secure the vote, including a strong campaign for straight-party voting. (This is no longer allowed, having been knocked out by the Republicans, due in no small part to my win.)

Judge John Robert Blakey

As with legislative matters, once Mike Madigan gave his word, you knew you could count on him. He never wavered in his support, and he never asked me for anything personal or political in return.

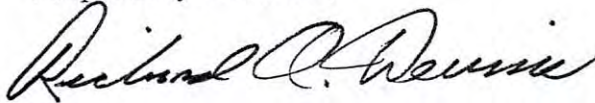
I was re-elected twice and ended up serving twelve years as State's Attorney. It was the most rewarding part of my professional life, and Mike Madigan is one of the people to whom I owe a great deal for that.

During those years, I saw Mike on many occasions, and we would have a chance to talk about various things. We are both Sox fans, so we enjoyed their one great season and commiserated with each other on less successful ones. He told me once that he and his son were going to visit as many major league parks as possible that summer. It was, to me, an indication of a regular guy who was very much a family man.

I have attempted to show in this letter that, in my experience, Mike Madigan was a thoughtful and dedicated legislative leader who was focused on doing what was best for our community. We did not always agree, but any differences were based on substance and not on personal considerations. When he was supportive, you could go to the bank with it, knowing he would always keep his word. In my many years in government, that is a quality not known in abundance.

In sum, in his dealings with me, Mike Madigan was always honorable and professional. It's hard to ask for more.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. Devine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent and the last name "Devine" following in a similar style.

Richard A. Devine



**Patrick Hickey**



April 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Patrick Hickey, and I was a lifelong Chicago resident, retired to Indiana and the proud son of an Irish American father who distinguished himself in battle in World War Two as a United States Marine fighting with the Third Marine Division. I am also a proud member of a large extended family of prominent members and leaders of organized labor unions in Chicago. I have spent my entire professional career in the education field serving primarily in the Catholic school systems.

I currently serve as a substitute teacher at Westville High School where I teach middle and high school students. While I do not earn a lot of money, I feel very fortunate because I feel my work serves a purpose and it is a labor of love.

In 1996 I was recruited to become the director of development at Leo High School by Leo President Robert Foster. President Foster was the first layperson to ever hold the title of President, and he was only granted the presidency because the Chicago Archdiocese was seeking to close the school due to lack of enrollment and change of ethnic enrollment from white to black. It was Bob Foster's strong belief that even though the ethnicity of the student body had changed the school's mission to educate inner city males remained the same regardless of color.

President Foster warned me before taking the job of development director that we faced an uphill battle to remain viable because enrollment was way down, and the Archdiocese had pulled its funding.

I accepted the job as a challenge because of my strong beliefs in Catholic education and equal educational opportunities for all. The job was difficult, and I was told more than I was allowed to give in my pitch. It seemed like we were always running short on funding and talk of closing was always prevalent. Then one day out of the blue President Foster received a phone call from Speaker Madigan requesting a meeting.

President Foster met with Madigan who told Foster that he had read about Leo's situation, and he wanted to help. When Foster inquired about why Madigan told him that he felt Leo was a strong anchor in the community and even though it was not in his district he felt it made Chicago stronger, safer and more stable.

Foster then assigned me to serve as a liaison to the Speakers office and the result was a large grant. I can honestly say that Leo High School would probably not exist today without Speaker Madigan's intervention into a school which he had no connection with and an act that he would get no credit for and derive no benefit from.


I have read a lot about Speaker Madigan and am aware that he has been convicted of some crimes, but I can honestly say that that is not the person I know who reached out to help a community in need for the sole purpose of strengthening a community and giving young men a fair shot at a great education and the life opportunities that come with that education.

I would humbly ask this court to take this great deed and the many other good deeds that he has done expecting nothing in return into consideration when sentencing Mr. Madigan.

Sincerely,

Mr. Patrick Hickey

BARBARA GIORGI VELLA



Honorable John Blakey  
U.S. District Court  
Northern District of Illinois  
Dirksen Federal Courthouse  
219 South Dearborn  
Chicago, Ill. 60604

Re: Michael Madigan

My name is Barbara Giorgi Vella. I am a personal friend of Michael Madigan and met him through my father "Zeke" Giorgi, who was a state representative for 29 years and served with Mike until he died. I am married to Frank Vella and we have three children. Two are attorneys. We have two grandchildren. I am an attorney and have practiced for 32 years.

I have known Mike for 40 years. My father had a close relationship with him as they were both Democrats and my father was in leadership during his tenure. My father had a great respect for Mike's work ethic as he was hard working and disciplined. They shared a belief that blue collar workers needed a voice in Springfield.

When persons are in leadership, there is an understanding that their words matter and that trust must be maintained by keeping your word. Every decision and agreement cannot not necessarily be written. My father was the son of Italian immigrants. He dropped out of high school to support his family, received his GED in the Army during World War II and went on to serve as a State Representative for 29 years. He had no illusions about how important he was and had no hidden agenda. My father's word was his bond with his family, constituents and fellow legislators. I can truthfully say my father acknowledged to me that he could trust Mike's word. This mutual trust was the foundation of their relationship.

My dad and Mike shared both shared a strong belief in family life. When I spoke to Mike on the phone, we often talked about our respective families. He wanted to know about my sisters, my husband, our children, my mother before she died and my nieces

and nephews. He was proud of his children and how they matured in their careers, relationships and as parents.

After my father died, I was motivated to keep his memory alive so I started a scholarship fund at NIU College of Law. Mike supported me in that and contributed to the fund and encouraged others to do so. Mike also honored my father in other ways. He established the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic which is housed in Rockford. It was opened in 2001 and is still operational.

The purpose of the Clinic is to train law students to prepare for their profession and to help people who need information and representation for criminal and civil matters. Since March 9, 2001, the Clinic has served 5,506 persons with legal matters. All services are free of charge. Presently the Clinic is serving 137 total clients, 102 in criminal defense and 35 in Civil Justice defense. The Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic has been recognized by the Winnebago County Health Department for leadership in violence prevention, and by the Illinois Bar Association for Excellence in Legal Education for emphasizing real world skills for law students. The Clinic also works closely with the Family Peace Center helping victims of domestic violence. My father would be proud that the Clinic continues the work that he supported. Without Mike's support and guidance, this Clinic would not have been available to our community.

I was approached by the University to honor Mike for his contributions to NIU. I asked him if he would like this. He declined any honors and stated he did this for his friend and not to honor himself.

Mike has been a wonderful friend to my father and a great friend to our family. We all miss my father and he is remembered by the City of Rockford and many people because of the Clinic, the naming of the State of Illinois building and the naming of part of Highway 39. Mike spoke the eulogy at his Mass. My father died in 1993 but many still remember him and his contributions to the people and the City he loved. I know that Mike helped him fulfill his mission. Theirs was a lasting friendship.

Thank you

BARBARA GIORGI VELLA

March 19, 2025

The Fall of 2007 was a challenging time for me. Recently divorced, I was still navigating its toll on my family, particularly my three school-aged children and on my career as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives. Divorce is always difficult, but it can be brutal for those in public office.

On a much broader stage, it was also a challenging time for our country with the deteriorating situations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. As you may recall, then President Bush implemented General Petraeus' Surge and sent an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq. For reasons not relevant to this letter, I answered that call and reenlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserves. I very quickly found myself training with a Civil Affairs unit based at Camp Pendleton.

Once our unit was mobilized for deployment to Iraq's Anbar Province, I made a public announcement that I would be taking a "leave of absence" from my duties as State Representative for the 97<sup>th</sup> District of the Illinois House of Representatives.

As you can imagine, opinions were mixed. Some folks were helpful, others not so much. I expected the pushback from the anti-war groups, and I expected some local political opposition about "abandoning my district."

What I didn't expect was the push by some in Republican leadership to pressure me to resign my seat. There were many reasons given with the biggest being my seat would be targeted by the Democrats, and I would cost House Republicans time and resources and possibly lose the seat.

It is difficult to express the level of anxiety that this caused. I was about to leave my family and friends and deploy to a war zone and some members of my own party were trying to force my resignation.

Desperate to retain my seat and my only job, I had a meeting with then Speaker Madigan to explain my situation and relay the concerns about the potential vulnerability of my seat. I can still remember the Speaker stating that it made no sense to target someone serving their country and noting that a seated member of the Illinois General Assembly hadn't deployed to a war zone since WW2.

The Speaker concluded our meeting by offering assistance to me, my staff and my district. I actually had Democrat House members come to my district and hold office hours. It is difficult to imagine that in today's environment.

There was no quid pro quo, no arm twisting on any votes. Upon my return, I resumed my seat and served as the loyal opposition for several more years. We disagreed on budgets and rules as we had pre-deployment.

Serving in a war zone demands one's undivided attention. Speaker Madigan's actions gave me a piece of mind about my district and removed a potential source of distraction. Those actions allowed me to focus on the mission at hand, a focus that greatly contributed to my safe return.

I will remain forever grateful.

Sincerely,  
Jim Watson  
Former State Representative, 97<sup>th</sup> District  
Staff Sergeant, USMC – Operation Iraqi Freedom

May 11, 2025

Honorable Robert J. Blakey  
U. S. District Judge  
Northern District of Illinois  
219 S. Dearborn  
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Sir,

I write to provide you with information about Michael J. Madigan.

I am an attorney, a former federal law clerk, the owner of an international homewares business, an elected official, and a Republican. For twenty-five years I have been the Chairman of the Sangamon County Board. In that capacity I came to know Mike Madigan professionally and personally.

My first introduction to Mike Madigan was in November of 2002, soon after the election of Rod Blagojevich as Governor. Our community had worked diligently over a number of years to secure funding for a performing arts center in Springfield. In the waning weeks of Governor George Ryan's term as governor we had secured a state grant for five million dollars that was critical to our construction financing. Newly elected Governor Blagojevich announced that he was cancelling all state grants awarded under Governor Ryan. As you can understand, the community was in a panic. Our local representatives knew no one in the incoming administration. In desperation we turned to Shirley Madigan, Mike's wife, who chaired in the Illinois Arts Council. She arranged for me to meet Mike Madigan. Mr. Madigan listened very intently to my presentation of the facts. At the conclusion of my presentation he said simply, "Let me see what I can do." Within a month of the new administration taking office, Governor Blagojevich announced that one grant, and only one grant, from his predecessor's authorizations would be funded: The Arts Center for Springfield, Illinois. Mike Madigan never asked for so much as a thank you for this invaluable service. He never asked to meet with any local leaders. He never asked for or received any local approbation. To this day, I don't believe anyone knows the instrumental role in played in securing this vital funding. He simply did what he thought was right.

It is said that no good deed goes unpunished. As proof of this adage, in 2009 I again went privately to Mike Madigan at a moment of existential crisis for our community. That year the Obama administration announced that as part of a high-speed rail program connecting Chicago to St. Louis, the Union Pacific Railroad would be building the

equivalent of the Berlin Wall through the heart of our town. The community rose in a fury that I never experienced before or since. But we could find no one in authority in state or local government who would oppose the plan. No elected official would dare stand in opposition to a popularly elected Democratic president, a newly inaugurated Democratic Governor, the Union Pacific Railroad or the state or federal bureaucratic planners. In desperation, I explained our plight to Mike Madigan. He listened thoughtfully, ask several incisive questions about alternatives and then said, "I will sponsor a bill in the state legislature to oppose this plan." At the request of a local Republican who he did not know well, Mike Madigan offered to sponsor a bill opposing the tightly knit plan of the Democratic President, his administration, the entire Democratic congressional delegation, the Democratic Governor and his administration, and the Union Pacific Railroad. That courageous act, forced the railroad and the bureaucrats to sit down and listen to our community. And that conversation led directly to the adoption of an alternative solution that will be completed in 2028. Again, Mike Madigan asked for nothing. He simply did the right thing for a community that wasn't his responsibility even if it meant opposing every state and federal official in his own Democratic party. I know of no better example of integrity.

I once served as the clerk to the federal judge in Springfield, Illinois. I recall the burden passing judgment placed on the federal judges I served. I have some, first hand, appreciation for the difficulty of weighing a lifetime of choices made. I hope I can assist you by relating that in my experience, the Mike Madigan I know, is a man of profound modesty, meticulous honesty, and steely integrity.

Sincerely,

Andy Van Meter

Chairman

Sangamon County Board



Dear Judge Blakey,

My name is Jessica Basham, and I currently work as a governmental consultant through my firm, Basham Government Solutions, LLC. Before starting that firm, I worked on the Illinois House Democratic Staff for over 18 years, from January 2003 through August 2021. In brief, I served as a Research Analyst from 2003-2013, Budget Director from 2013-2018, and Chief of Staff from 2018-2021. For most of that time, Mr. Madigan served as Speaker of the Illinois House, and I reported directly or indirectly to him.

I have interacted with Mr. Madigan for more than 20 years, and during that time, Mr. Madigan consistently treated me with nothing but respect and kindness. The profession I choose to work in has not historically maintained a reputation as one that is respectful and kind to women. Even as a young staffer with relatively little experience, I believe Mr. Madigan could see my hard work and dedication, and he encouraged me to learn more and grow as a professional. For example, at times I would ask Mr. Madigan questions about people or issues so I could gain context and knowledge to better understand why things played out the way they did. While others might have not taken the time to explain, Mr. Madigan would share with me his honest insights. When circumstances necessitated the selection of a new Chief of Staff, replacing one that had served in the role for decades, Mr. Madigan put his full faith and confidence in me, supporting me in helping him to lead the caucus and staff through a tumultuous time.

While under his supervision, there were several times when Mr. Madigan prioritized my well-being over issues concerning the job. I can remember an instance in particular when, as Chief, I needed to have a difficult conversation with a caucus member concerning staff management. It was very appropriate that I engage with this caucus member and set boundaries concerning their intrusion into my role as Chief of Staff, and while I insisted that I do so, Mr. Madigan was more concerned about my well-being. Just as this example illustrates, I always knew that Mr. Madigan cared for me as a person, even over a dispute with a caucus member. He gave me the support I needed to be confident in my choices, as well as grace when I made a mistake.

I have always known Mr. Madigan to be an honest and trustworthy person, both in terms of my direct interactions with him as well as my impressions of his interactions with others. I don't believe he would ever lie, and once given, he is always true and faithful to his word. I've come to rely on Mr. Madigan as a person I can go to for an honest and truthful assessment of anything, whether it be about my career, the people we have both worked with, or the issues of the day.

After Mr. Madigan was no longer serving in the role of Speaker, our relationship changed into a friendship, rather than a working relationship. We often talk on the phone about the policies, politics, and people we've dealt with for many years, and I always make a special effort to visit him in person when I travel to Chicagoland. To be perfectly honest, I am not happy and will never be happy about the circumstances surrounding his departure from the Illinois Legislature. Just as I know how deeply he cared for, and how hard he fought to protect, Illinois' working-class families, the Democratic Party, and Legislature, I believe he struggles with no longer being in a position to be that Protector. I hope that through our conversations, I help to provide him with some connection with the happenings in Springfield.

It's not lost on me that while I speak so fondly of him, I do not refer to Mr. Madigan as "Mike." While he has suggested that I can and should call him "Mike," I simply cannot bring myself to do so. Frankly, it's hard for me to refer to him as Mr. Madigan. The way I was raised, when someone duly earns respect, that respect is reciprocated wholeheartedly. When I speak with

him, I will always refer to him as "Speaker," in reflection of the hard work and sacrifice he gave for decades and the respect he has earned from me.

I ask you, Judge, to please consider the life-changing positive impact that Speaker has had not only on me, but countless others that he has impacted in his life of service.

Most sincerely,  
Jessica Basham





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Spring Hill College, AL

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The University of Scranton, PA

University of Detroit Mercy, MI

University of San Francisco, CA

Xavier University, OH

March 27, 2025

The Honorable John Robert Blakey  
U.S. District Court, Northern Illinois District  
Dirksen Federal Building  
219 S. Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60640

Dear Judge Blakey,

I am happy to write this letter for Mike Madigan attesting to the character and principles of this man. I have known Mike now since 2001 the year I became president of Loyola University Chicago. Our friendship has been both professional and personal. Shirley Madigan was a trustee of LUC when I became the University's CEO and religious leader. She was then the head of the Illinois Council for the Arts and a strong supporter of our growing fine and performing arts program.

My career has been in higher education. As a Jesuit I have worked at several Jesuit universities, (Fordham, Saint Louis University, Georgetown and the Gregorian in Rome). I am presently the President of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities and reside in Washington, DC.

My academic specialty has been child and family development and family counseling, which I practiced and taught for ten years before doing academic administration. (Your honor, I can tell you that the best preparation for university administration is working with dysfunctional families. If we meet, we can discuss the similarities of our professions, including priesthood, which I know something about, as well.)

My first encounter with Mike, socially, was that first year working for the LUC Board. Someone told me after the first social occasion that people were curious about the conversation among Shirley, Mike, and me. I asked why. They said: we have not seen him laugh so much. I learned that professionally, Mike Madigan is a very serious man. In social settings, however, he is charming and loves some good humor. (I suspect this is the saving grace part of being Irish.)

Over my 14 years as president of LUC, we had many social occasions as well as quiet dinners with Mike and Shirley, including his son. Most of my dealings, however, were with Mike as Speaker of the House. I knew I liked him in that role when he told me he was there to help the university and looked forward to my visit in Springfield and, second, would it be okay if I would say the opening prayer for the legislative session? When I asked later on in my tenure why he wanted me to open the General Assembly each time I visited, he said: Candidly,

priests' prayers are shorter than preachers' and Rabbis' prayers. Your honor, this is true, for the most part, they are. (Many of God's people know this.) I learned that I could bring him the University's problems that Springfield can help address, and Mike would work with the legislature and Governor for solutions. Mike's driving motive is solving people's problems. This is the essence of the man....and his love for his wife and family.

Over the years we asked Mike for help. For instance, I needed to upgrade a facility downtown for a large Mediaeval and Renaissance Art Collection, the D'Arcy Collection. This would make it available for the public. Mike—with Shirley's help—got us the money. (Your honor, I am not showing this to a lawyer or to Mike and wonder if I have just revealed anything morally wrong about securing that grant. It never crossed my mind because we Catholics go through Mary to get things from Jesus, and this looked to me like an equivalent situation.)

Mike was also quite helpful in getting internships and introducing us to people who could help the University. But, perhaps the most important legislation he helped us with-- time and time again-- was helping maintain the Illinois Scholarship program for in-state students. Tuition assistance from the Government—Federal and State—is something of a lifeline for middle class and economically disadvantaged students. LUC has always been a home for first-generation students. This was a regular battle to keep alive and keep renewing. Even if the state subsidy grew only marginally, at least it was not cut like many other programs.

While Mike Madigan was speaker, this became a "sacred cow," and thousands of Illinois citizens have taken advantage of being able to bring their scholarship dollars to any institution in the State that they desire and are able to attend.

I guess when the mighty are no longer in charge, their good deeds are often forgotten. I know that there are many sacrifices that public officials "offer up," as we Catholics say, which are forgotten or ignored. And, I am still having trouble understanding his guilt. Sorry, but I grew up in the Italian section of St. Louis, The Hill. We were taught to be generous with your time and talent. Mike was always generous with his time and talent. Doing good things for others, that is what we are supposed to do.

Well, I have taken your time. I am happy, as I said, to offer this testimony about Mr. Speaker. Thank you for reading.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael J. Garanzini". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Fr. Michael J. Garanzini, SJ  
President  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities



Elliot Miller



US District Court  
Honorable Judge John Blakey  
219 S Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

April 3, 2025

RE: Sentencing of Michael Madigan

Honorable Judge Judge Blakey

I would like to comment on the sentencing of Michael Madigan.

I have never met the man. I have a 55-year-old son who fell off his roof and suffered a traumatic brain injury.

12 years ago, during his stay in a nursing home, he received a bill for over \$12,000 (twelve thousand dollars).

His wife (now divorced) believed that Medicaid was going to pay this bill; and they did not.

It was very difficult to communicate with this department of the government. I wrote a letter to Speaker Madigan explaining my son's accident and recovery. Two days later I got a phone call from an aid of Speaker Madigan and I was able to get my son Medicaid.

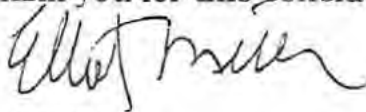
I never received a letter, a text or email from the Speaker asking me for anything, no request for dinner tickets, fund raisers or golf outings.

When no one would give me the time of day, Speaker Madigan responded that any help my family or my son needed would be available.

Your Honor, based on my dealings with Speaker Madigan, it is clear he helped many ordinary people who have problems.

I ask you to take this into consideration as you review his punishment. I ask you to please show mercy to Michael Madigan.

Thank you for this consideration.



Elliot Miller

February 7th, 2025

To Judge Blakey and the court,

My name is Maria Veronica Reynoso, I am 54 years old and have been a U.S. resident for almost 4 years now. Due to my husband's work we had the great honor of knowing Michael J. Madigan on a personal level.

Mr. Madigan is a very community oriented person. In a time where my immigration status seemed dire, he stood up for me. He willingly went out of his way and wrote a letter to USCIS to help me obtain my residency. Now, I am willfully writing this because we know him as a great community man who stands up for us, his community. He listens and helps out the community as a good public servant should. When we had complained to our alderman that our alley was in disarray, we were ignored for years. He stood up for us and in a month the alley was repaired. A public servant who actually listens, helps, and responds to his community is a great man.

Thank you for the time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Veronica Reynoso". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Maria Veronica Reynoso

February 28, 2025

Dear Judge Blakey,

We are writing to you of an account of how Michael Madigan impacted, actually added, to our family. We would not have our daughter, who is now 31 years old, if not for Mr. Madigan's personal involvement in our situation.

30 years ago, we were in the process of adopting our daughter, Anna, from Korea. She was born premature and in an incubator after her birth. At nine months old, she was medically cleared by Korea to be able to be adopted and be sent to America. To our knowledge, she had no other medical issues. One of the conditions required by U.S. Immigration is that the child have medical insurance. At that time, we had individual medical insurance, and therefore, any additions would be subject to insurance company approval for any adopted children to be added to our policy. She was denied by our current carrier. We applied to several other insurance companies, who also denied coverage. While I understood that the insurance companies did not want to take any risk, their reasons were rather trivial. One actually denied because my daughter had an umbilical hernia, an outer belly button.

At this point, we were getting desperate and thought we might have to refuse receiving our daughter. We sent several letters out to various public officials seeking help. To our surprise, we received a phone call from Michael Madigan, and he expressed concern for our situation. He asked who we had attempted to contact, and if one was the Illinois Commissioner for Insurance. This was one of the people we attempted to contact. At this point, Mr. Madigan immediately got the commissioner on the phone and asked him to review our situation. Our daughter was insured shortly thereafter. Mr. Madigan personally called again a few days later to follow up. This was and is the only contact we have ever had with Michael Madigan other than a Christmas card of his beautiful family.

To this day, we do not know why Michael Madigan reached out and helped us. Actually, we are Republicans, and we cynically expected to have to do something in return. No such request ever came, and as I said, it has been 30 years. I **do** know that the measure of a man's character is reflected in the good deeds he does in secret. The gift of my daughter, who is a healthy, happily married, woman, would not have happened without the kindness of Michael Madigan.

Sincerely,

Daniel and Francine Signore





Dear Judge Blakey,

My name is **David Koehler**, and I am the uncle of **Connor Koehler**, a 2015 graduate of Lemont High School. I am writing to share a story that profoundly impacted our family and highlighted the character of one individual whose actions changed the course of my nephew's life.

In the fall of Connor's senior year, he expressed his desire to pursue entry into the **United States Naval Academy** in Annapolis, MD. He knew the odds were stacked against him, as no graduate from Lemont High School had ever attended a service academy. Nonetheless, Connor was determined, and this aspiration became his goal.

One evening, while dining with his father at **Palermo's** in Oak Lawn, Connor had an unexpected encounter with **Michael Madigan**, the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives. His father, recognizing the Speaker, suggested that Connor introduce himself, as **entry into the Naval Academy requires a Congressional nomination**. Without hesitation, Connor approached the Speaker and shared his ambition of attending the Naval Academy.

The Speaker listened intently, took down Connor's number, and assured him that he would look into what he could do to help. This kind of personal attention from such a high-profile figure was truly remarkable.

At the time, I was unaware of this interaction, but later that weekend, as we were returning home from our family cabin in northern Wisconsin, Connor's phone rang. He answered, and I distinctly heard him say, "Oh, thank you for calling, Mr. Madigan." From the conversation, it became clear that the Speaker had followed through on his promise and was reaching out to help Connor with his Naval Academy application.

Upon the call's conclusion, I was in complete disbelief and asked, "Was that **THE** Michael Madigan on the phone, and how did he get your number?" Connor explained his encounter and how the Speaker had pledged to contact **Congressman Dan Lipinski**, U.S. Representative for Illinois's 3rd Congressional District, to help Connor secure his nomination.

What was so impressive—and meaningful to our family—was the **personal attention and follow-through** Michael Madigan demonstrated. His efforts on a Saturday afternoon helped Connor achieve his dream. Representative Lipinski, following through on the Speaker's support, nominated Connor for the Naval Academy, and Connor was **accepted into the United States Naval Academy** in 2015. He chose the Naval Academy to pursue his dream of becoming a military pilot, as it offered the best opportunities for aviation among the service academies.

Connor's dedication paid off. Upon graduating from the Naval Academy, he was selected for the **United States Navy Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor program**, more commonly known as **Top Gun**. His selection was based on his exceptional flight performance, leadership, and peer and command recommendations. He went on to serve with **Strike Fighter Squadron 11 (VFA-11)**, also known as the "**Red Rippers**".

In late 2024, Connor participated in a mission aboard the **USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69)**, as part of a U.S. military operation to protect international shipping lanes in the Red Sea and counter the growing threat from **Iranian-backed Houthi rebels**. After 9 months of successful operations, Connor and his squadron returned to the United States, having accomplished their mission.

A few months later, I had a chance encounter with Speaker Madigan at a restaurant. His table was next to mine, and I felt compelled to express my gratitude for the difference he made in Connor's life. The Speaker graciously listened and asked me to send him a picture of **Lieutenant Connor Koehler** in front of his F/A-18 fighter jet.

Without Michael Madigan's selfless efforts, Connor would not be the courageous, talented individual he is today. The Speaker's actions shaped his path to success—through the Naval Academy, Top Gun, and ultimately, his military service. The Koehler family will be forever indebted to Michael Madigan for the opportunity he provided for Connor and for his unwavering commitment to helping others.

In closing, I ask that you consider the good Michael Madigan has done, the countless individuals he has helped, and his willingness to sacrifice his time for the benefit of those in need of his assistance when determining his sentence. His actions have had a lasting, positive impact on our family, and we are deeply grateful for that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**David Koehler**

Uncle of Connor Koehler



Dear Judge Blakely,

As a child growing up at [REDACTED] from the years 1971 to 1989 I remember my parents talking about how helpful Michael Madigan was in the 13th ward. He would always help people in the neighborhood and their families. He would provide answers to services and programs needed in the community.

My Dad lived in the neighborhood until he recently died and my dad would always reach out to the 13th Ward when he had safety concerns. Michael Madigan provided handicapped parking for my mom when she was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. He made it accessible for families to reach out to get city services. He would address issues and concerns people would have in the neighborhood.

My experience related to Michael Madigan was that he served his community well.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Servatius". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "J" and "S".

Julie Servatius, nee Elwood

Dear Judge Blakey:

We grew up and currently reside in the 13th ward. We are now in our 70s. We feel as though Mr. Madigan has always been a part of our neighborhood life. As members of his community, we have always known, been aware of or benefited from Mr. Madigan's hard work, kind heart and good judgement.

Growing up in Mr. Madigan's ward, we always had the best city services. Our streets were safe, plowed, trash removed, trees trimmed and precinct captains who knew us by name, checking in to see if we needed anything. Every Halloween, children would line up for blocks to go trick or treating at his decorated "haunted" house. He developed the senior citizen snow removal program which exists to this day and is the envy of every other ward in the city. He mentored children and established internship programs. The neighborhood knew that if you had any type of issue or problem, the first place you could call was the ward office which would either resolve the problem or direct you to the proper resource. That was what Mr. Madigan did for our neighborhood.

When we were young it was rumored that Mr. Madigan came to the assistance of families who were in need or who had lost a parent and were having a difficult time. At the time we never knew the names of the beneficiaries of Mr. Madigan's caring generosity. It wasn't until later in life that anyone ever spoke of it. But that was Mr. Madigan's way - he never wanted fanfare or credit. He did all of this out of the goodness of his heart. To this day, we are still surprised at the many stories that are coming out from people who he has helped. That is what Mr. Madigan did for the families in his community.

Our personal story involves our younger brother who never married or had children. At age fifty-five he was diagnosed with an extremely aggressive debilitating disease. Within months he lost his mobility, his ability to speak and most of his motor skills. His condition was so serious that he needed constant care that we could no longer provide. He was too young to be accepted into a nursing home and we couldn't afford the three that said they might consider accepting him. We were desperate to find a place to help us care for him so we went to the ward office for direction. After listening to our story, Mr. Madigan and his staff said they would look into it. Within a month they called us saying they had found a nice place that would accept him and had negotiated a price we could afford to pay. We have never been so relieved and were beyond thankful for his assistance. In our opinion, this is how you can measure the true character of a man - when he puts himself out and changes the direction of a life for the better and asks for nothing in return. That is what Mr. Madigan did for us. We will be eternally grateful to him for this kindness.

Mr. Madigan is a kind, humble, brilliant, hardworking man who has devoted his entire life to public service and helping others. He did so quietly without the need for attention or recognition. He always believed in giving people a second chance. It is our hope that this good man is permitted to spend his well deserved retirement with his family.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Bob & Judy Carey

Your Honor,

My name is Tom Ryan and I've been a personal friend of Mike Madigan for over 40 years. When we first met, it was anything but smooth due to my rambunctious youth (I needed to be straightened out if you know what I mean). We met when I was a young laborer and as years progressed, I started doing things that proved that I was growing up.

After settling down, getting married and pursuing something more out of life, other than a bottle of beer or a motorcycle, opportunities arose. Along the way, in the Department of Streets and Sanitation, I advanced over the years from a laborer, to a ward clerk, keeping track of payroll and attendance, and finally landing my dream job of a Ward Superintendent. My dream job was short lived as I was being considered to become a Division Superintendent at the request of my Commissioner, Eileen Carey. She was an incredible boss who I'm forever grateful to have worked under! I refused it at first because I just wanted to stay local and work with the people that I had labored with and known all my life in sanitation. I didn't want to supervise hundreds of people and argue with the likes of people that made you feel unwelcome. After a meeting with Mr. Madigan, he assured me that moving on to a better position would be good for me in the long run.

With that, I was on my way to my new office and my new job. One thing Mr. Madigan continued to say, as I climbed the ranks, was how people are going to come to you and ask you for things. Some of the things they're going to ask of you are not going to be legal, you're going to know immediately that it's something they shouldn't be asking you. I hear his voice in my head till this day



saying, "Remember Tom, resist and do your job!" So as time went on, truer than fiction became a matter of fact. Everything he told me became real and all of a sudden people that I never knew were showing up at my door, asking for things that they knew I could make happen. Yes, I resisted them all, I lost friends over the 16 years in the title as division Superintendent. I was subjected to some hectic, real life situations and situations I wouldn't wish on anybody else. I know for a fact that there are people who have gone to prison and lost everything; friends and co workers alike. Those who had the same opportunities that I had had, but they just did not heed the advice of Mr. Madigan.

Not once, ever, has this man ever asked me to do anything outside the straight and narrow. All he ever preached to me was "do your job!". I know from experiencing life altering investigations that our department was involved in (Hired Truck Scandal, Silver Shovel Scandal, Hiring Scandal, etc.) that I'm in a better place today because of the advice that I followed while working for Mr. Madigan.

There's been other examples of how Mr. Madigan has impacted my life, not only me, but my wife of 44 years who's been afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis since she was 16. My wife and I had saved up enough money to go out and buy a life altering van with a motorized gate. My wife is unable to walk independently; she requires a motorized scooter. This van would grant her independence. She could go out on her own and not have to rely on someone going with her to assist. Unfortunately, a manipulative sales person at Mancari Chrysler didn't answer us truthfully with how this van was constructed. We moved forward, unaware we have been deceived, we took our new van to



Michigan, to a company called Freedom Motors for them to convert the van into a handicap accessible vehicle. Sadly, again, we were lied to about the conversion. How they proceeded with the conversion, my wife was unable to swing her legs comfortably and safely to get in her scooter. Once we discovered what both companies had done, how they lied to us, we knew the van was useless to my wife because she was unable to access her scooter in a safe manner. When we approached each company, they acted as if they didn't know what we were talking about; even though we showed them physically what was specifically needed. After several calls to the Illinois Attorney General's office, to the offices of the companies we used, we were getting no where. I had a chance to speak to Mr. Madigan about this problem to which he kindly put me in touch with two attorneys (Heather Wier & Adam Vaught) to represent us and get to the bottom of a very bad situation for my wife. With these attorneys help, in the end, due to their diligence, a deal was struck to put this entire mess to rest.

We were still out a significant amount of money, but we were glad to be done with a vehicle that was of no use to my wife and her quality of life.

My wife and I were forever grateful for how Mr. Madigan took the time to listen to the wrongdoings to our family and without hesitation, shared his resources with us. His suggestion of these two, wonderful attorneys, assisted us through a very stressful situation in our lives. I'm happy to say that we have a van now, that is fully functional and allows my wife the independence she deserves to access our community.

In closing your honor, I just want to stress how I came from a home where we all worked hard. There were seven of us kids, five boys and two girls. My mother worked as much as she could at a grocery store all while being a full time mother. My father was a Chicago Policeman and back then, when we were growing up, we knew not to get in trouble on the street or involved in a situation that would result in being brought home by somebody and handed over to our parents. On the way out the door at the house, my father always took time to say "I'm gonna tell you again, if you see trouble, you better walk away from it! Don't come home here and say ohh I was just doing this or I was doing that. You got me? You better walk away!" Till this day, I live by this advice and I have instilled it within my own children. Walk away from trouble, no excuses.

After I lost my parents, I gravitated to Mr. Madigan for advice, council, or words of encouragement on topics that came up or possibly some direction with an issue at work or even in my home with my family. There's nothing that I could not ask this man and his answers to me are always the most sincere truth and advice. To this very day, even with the amount of things on his mind, the problems with all his legal matters, caring for his wife Shirley, who is not in the best of health, he still has time to listen to me when I ask a question or need advice.

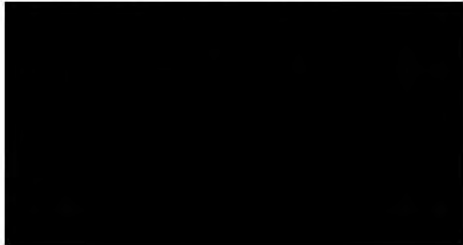
I love this man from the bottom of my heart and that goes for my family as well. This man has always had my back and guided me to do what's right every single time. He gave me a chance because he saw something in me, beneath the surface. I beg you to see that and give him a chance as well, Your Honor.



Thank you for taking the time to read my words. Please consider this letter and my words as you pass judgment on my dear friend. Many thanks.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas K Ryan



Dear Judge Blakey,

I wanted to take a moment to share something meaningful to me about a man who has been an important part of my life—Michael Madigan.

I first met Mr. Madigan at St. Adrian's, and I consider him not only a family friend but also someone who played a crucial role in my life during a particularly difficult time. After my father passed away when I was young, I struggled deeply with loss, confusion, and pain. In the aftermath, alcohol became something I leaned on to cope. I didn't fully understand how much it was taking from me until Mr. Madigan noticed what was happening.

He saw through my struggles and, without hesitation, reached out. He recognized the path I was heading down and made the effort to talk to me, offering guidance that I so desperately needed. What really struck me was how Mr. Madigan was able to relate to me on a personal level. He shared with me how his own father had battled similar demons, and that connection gave me the strength to face my own.

His words were not only comforting, they were the push I needed to make a change in my life. He showed me the importance of confronting my issues head-on and finding healthier ways to deal with my difficulties. I am deeply grateful for his honesty, his time, and the kindness he showed when I needed it most. Mike Madigan is and was the Most Honest Truthful Man I have ever met in my life.

Michael Madigan's support didn't just help me through a hard time, it helped me find a way to move forward. He's a person who, in his own quiet way made a lasting difference in my life.

For that, I will always be thankful for Mr. Madigan's honesty and unwavering Truthfulness that made me the best person I can be and, be a kind, helpful, responsible, honest, productive neighbor, Cousin, friend.

Sharon Crowley



Jesse Leone  
904 S College St. Apt E  
Springfield, IL 62704  
217-891-0679

April 15, 2025

Hon. Judge Blakey  
U.S. District Court - Northern District of IL

Dear Judge Blakey,

In addition to family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Madigan, I hope you will take a moment to hear how a rank and file state employee for the Speaker's Office during Mr. Madigan's leadership felt about the former Speaker, and the positive impact I believe he had on his staff and folks such as myself, both professionally and personally.

My mother worked for the Speaker's Office in the 80's and 90's, and I have fond memories of her time there and the people within the office. She was a young single mother raising me, and was also in the Army Reserve. When she returned home from a tour of active duty during the Gulf War, Speaker Madigan and his staff welcomed my mother back with a ceremony and the office offered her support during her absence and upon her return.

When I began working for the same office nearly 25 years later, it felt like much the same place but with different faces. Unfortunately, I entered my employment with a drinking issue that ended up worsening during my tenure. When I thought I'd have my employment terminated, I was instead offered assistance and support - guided assistance on getting help for my issue, and words of encouragement from my bosses and peers. I accepted the help and remained employed.

After a couple of years of being alcohol-free, I took it upon myself to write then-Speaker Madigan a letter thanking him for the way I felt he ran his office, and for his office quite literally saving my life. My impression and the general feeling I got from those who knew the Speaker personally was that he was kind, generous and honest, and while my interactions with Mr. Madigan were few and in passing, that was always the experience I had. Staff would sometimes muse we would rather have the Speaker call the office than other staff because of how polite he was. Most importantly, I write this letter today with the same belief of Mr. Madigan that I've always had - he's a decent and honest man of integrity who lead by example. This letter and my aforementioned letter would not exist if I believed or had witnessed anything to the contrary, and I truly do not believe the office environment I experienced would have functioned as it did were that not the case.

Thank you for your time regarding this matter.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse N. Leone', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jesse N. Leone

The Honorable John Robert Blakey  
U.S. District Court, Northern Illinois District  
Dirksen Federal Building  
219 Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60640

Dear Judge Blakey,

My name is Robert Wagner, most commonly known as Bobby with my family and friends in the Chicago area. I currently reside in Houston, Texas, with my daughter Samantha. I grew up in the West Lawn neighborhood on the southwest side of Chicago on the same block as Mr. Madigan back in the 80's and 90's. I would see him and his family quite frequently as his house was on the corner that led to school and my little league baseball games. I always received a friendly hello from him or he would ask how the game went when I would walk home from the games. At the time, I didn't realize how much of an impact he would have on my future.

Upon turning 17, my junior year of high school at St Rita, I was receiving moderate interest from small colleges for baseball and football. The only Division 1 interest was West Point. I was receiving guidance from my high school but a lot of the information was overwhelming. At the time, my parents were going through a divorce and my dad had zero interaction with me from my freshman year of high school forward. He made it clear that I was not getting any help from him. If anything, he was hoping I would fail as I'm pretty sure he still does to this day. During my Junior year at St Rita, Mr. Madigan was able to assist my mom and I with the application process. He kept us on track and made sure we were hitting our deadlines. He was also the State Representative for my area and I needed his recommendation in order to be considered to attend West Point. With all that was going on in my life, Mr. Madigan took the time to make sure I had a fair shot at being accepted into West Point. I left for West Point in July of 1993 and graduated in 1997. I spent 5 years in the US Army upon graduation in the Field Artillery. After completing my service, I became a Financial Advisor and that has been my profession for the past 23 years. I have an amazing daughter, Samantha, who is now a Junior in High School. She is a straight A student in AP and honors classes as well as a varsity softball player.

Mr. Madigan was instrumental in guiding me to achieve my life long dreams and without his support in my high school years things would not be as they are today. He stepped up for me when others did not and I ask that you take this into consideration when determining his fate.



Robert M Wagner



Dear Honorable Judge John Blakey,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Mike Madigan. To say that Mr. Madigan saved my life would NOT be an exaggeration. I would like to give you some background on who I am and where I came from. I was raised by a single working mother with 4 siblings. My mother did a great job, but was stretched thin and wasn't able to spend as much time with everyone as she would have liked. This caused me to resort to spending a lot of time on the streets unsupervised. Due to this, my career with alcohol and drugs began at the age of 11 and probably contributed to me not being a good student. Unfortunately, it got so bad that law enforcement knew me on a first name basis and I spent many nights in jail cells.

I was truly lost and was looking for opportunities. I considered joining the Hells Angels, but fortunately, my grandmother didn't think that was a good idea and set up a meeting with Mr. Madigan. Mr. Madigan was known to try and help out anyone in the neighborhood that he could. The day that I met Mr. Madigan is when my life began to change. I remember him asking me what I was doing in life, I replied "I want to be a landlord, and I want to join the Chicago Fire Department." However, I had failed a real estate class and appraisal class. Mr. Madigan said to me "the good news John is you don't need to be a realtor to be a landlord." He suggested that I sign up for the Chicago Fire Department and gave me some direction on how to apply for a job at Cook County in the interim. Since the day I signed up with the County, I remained sober, which is now over 40 years.

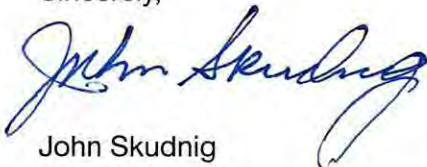
Mike Madigan is a father figure that I never had. He was so generous with his time and would have many talks with me. He once said to me, "John, instead of looking at a crime and saying I'm not gonna do that because I don't wanna go to jail," he said "maybe consider saying I'm not gonna do that because it's wrong." Speaker Madigan taught me about right from wrong, obeying the law, and always doing the right thing. He changed my thinking and totally turned my life around. I have spent the rest of my life focusing on being a productive member of society.

I spent 25 years on the Chicago Fire Department and ended up getting into the real estate business at Mr. Madigan's encouragement. Over the course of my career, I have owned 63 rental condominiums and 15 large apartment buildings that easily totals over 200 rentals units.

I'm now 10 years retired from the Chicago Fire Department, happily married with a wonderful wife and 2 beautiful children ages 7 and 9. Without Mike's support and encouragement over the years I never would be in this position today. He is a an amazing man, who is always humble, supportive, and willing to lend his time to people in the community. What always amazed me about Mike is that he would constantly offer his time and support and wouldn't think of himself. He wouldn't expect something in return from me.

Judge, this is one story I am telling you, but I know about 100 people that have a very similar story. They all say the same thing, Michael Madigan would always try and help them beyond words.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Skudnig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "J" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

John Skudnig



## THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

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March 3, 2025

Dear Judge,

Greetings from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Belleville where I serve as Superintendent of Catholic Schools [23 elementary and 3 high schools with enrollment of 4935]. I met Michael Madigan and his wife Shirley fifteen years ago when I was president of his high school alma mater, Saint Ignatius College Prep in Chicago. At that time, we struck up a meaningful friendship. He received an alumni award from the school and would often attend various events at the school as a loyal and supportive alumnus. He was not only a generous benefactor, but he took time from his busy schedule to attend events at the school when he was able. I especially recall that he and Shirley attended our Mass of the Holy Spirit several times which opened the school year at Holy Family Church adjacent to the school in sweltering late summer weather.

Saint Ignatius offered two trips to Italy during my time that I led and the Madigans were wonderful pilgrims. Mike has a keen interest in history and was often a source of perspective as we visited various places. He and Shirley were unfailingly gracious and kind, even with a few trying characters who were also on the trip. Travelling throughout Italy gave us lots of time to talk about faith, family, friends, and history. Clearly, Mike was 'off the clock' on these trips and people respected his time to be with family and make new friends. He always gives someone his complete attention and is a good listener with a gentle sense of humor and irony. As husband, father, and grandfather, I'm sure he would cite as what brings him the greatest satisfaction, despite his years and accomplishments in public service.

While I was at Saint Ignatius, we had a young man who was eager to get into the Naval Academy needing endorsements from his US Congressional Representative, which he received from Representative Gutierrez. I contacted Speaker Madigan and asked if might be able to endorse the young man, Mack Spohnholtz, and the Speaker stepped up. Mack was admitted and met his future bride at the Naval Academy and were married in 2023; the Speaker's



assistance was another kind gesture that helped a fine young man into the Naval Academy and eventually led to his marriage and future. A seemingly small administrative letter opened doors to an education and family life.

When the Invest in Kids Illinois legislation was introduced, School Choice advocates were very eager to see this project approved. Cardinal Cupich contacted me and asked if I would call Speaker Madigan and encourage him to support the legislation and I did so. Mike and I had never discussed politics, but I was supportive of this bill and was pleased to encourage the Speaker to consider endorsing it, even though his party is typically against School Choice. His support helped pave the way for 9600 low-income children to access better schools throughout the state for five years. I am certain that this bill would never have been passed without the support, vision, and courage of Speaker Madigan.

Many families are trapped in underperforming schools simply because they cannot afford the tuition of private and parochial schools. I thought Speaker Madigan showed exemplary leadership and his vision on this issue made a massive difference in the lives of those who accessed the program, by reaching across the political aisle and lifting up vulnerable and forgotten children trapped in underperforming schools. Sadly, this program was not renewed in 2023.

In all of these situations that I have cited, [donating to his alma mater, assisting a young man who wanted to serve our nation in the Naval Academy, and supporting thousands of disadvantaged students in getting a better education] he did so selflessly from the generosity of his heart. His only desire was that these efforts would benefit the lives of recipients with absolutely no expectations.

I can only imagine the many decisions Mike Madigan has made which changed people's lives for the better. I ask that you take into consideration the many things accomplished by Mike that strengthened the common good and made a huge difference in the quality of life for so many people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Michael Caruso, SJ". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fr. Michael Caruso, SJ  
Director of Education/Superintendent of Schools